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Håkon Lunde Saxi

# Nordic defence Cooperation after the Cold War

# INSTITUTT FOR FORSVARSTUDIER

SKIPPERGATA 17C, 0152 OSLO, NORGE

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Editor: Anna Therese Klingstedt



Håkon Lunde Saxi

# Nordic defence cooperation after the Cold War

## AUTHOR

Håkon Lunde Saxi (b. 1983) is a research fellow with the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies and has published a monograph and several articles on Nordic security and defence policy. He holds a Master of Philosophy in History (2009) from the University of Oslo, a Master of Science in International Relations (2008) from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and has done an internship with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

## SUMMARY

During the Cold War the different alignment choices of the Nordic states meant that military cooperation among them was highly circumscribed, and security issues were taboo in the Nordic Council. Following the events of 1989–91 Nordic defence cooperation intensified, and new institutions were established to facilitate joint deployments, acquisitions, research and development. In the late 2000s there was another surge in Nordic military cooperation which culminated in the organisation Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO). The main driver was economic: the Nordic Armed Forces were facing static or shrinking budgets, rising costs, and a demand to take part in new post-Cold War international missions.

Given similarities in terms of size, culture and geographical proximity, the Nordic countries are well placed to form a so-called cluster-group of NATO/EU countries. Collaboration on military matters could proceed more readily within such a group than would be possible with larger and more heterogeneous organisations. There is, however, no shared Nordic view on 'hard security' issues in the Nordic region itself, which suggests that a joint security and defence regime aiming at something close to a Nordic alliance may find it hard to succeed. What NORDEFCO offers is an opportunity to get better value from the Nordic defence budgets by doing more joint research, acquisitions, education, training and deployments. The Swedish, Norwegian and Danish Armed Forces are quite similar in structure, which should facilitate cooperation, but Denmark, for political reasons, has held back. The Finnish Armed Forces would be a somewhat more challenging partner, due to the much larger contingent of inactive reserve forces, while Iceland is mostly excluded due to its lack of proper armed forces. All the Nordic states will face challenges domestically if NORDEFCO advances to the stage at which people need to relocate, changes jobs and industrial contracts move out of the country. If the organisation does reach this stage, it will require deft distributive bargaining by the Nordic governments.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	Advanced Mortar System
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control Systems
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EDA	European Defence Agency
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
FDF	Finnish Defence Forces
ICRU	Iceland Crisis Response Unit
IFOR	Implementation Force
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NBG	Nordic Battle Group
NORDAC	Nordic Armaments Co-operation
NORDCAPS	Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support
NORDEFCO	Nordic Defence Cooperation
NORDSUP	Nordic Supportive Defence Structures
PfP	Partnership of Peace
SUCBAS	Sea Surveillance Cooperation in the Baltic Sea
UN	United Nations

# Nordic defence at a crossroads

Most armed forces are struggling to address the above average growth in the cost of military equipment. This is not a new phenomenon; it's been around since at least the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kennedy 1989, 442–443). Kenneth Adelman and Norman Augustine have called the phenomenon 'techflation'. Adopting a zero real-growth defence budget, they argue, will not keep the force size static, but lead to its decline (Adelman and Augustine 1990, 90–91). A study by the Norwegian Defence Research Establishments put this gradual increase in unit costs at between 2 and 6 per cent above inflation. Over the long-term, it maintained, there are only three main strategies to compensate for it: reducing the number of units; cutting whole military capabilities; and decreasing unit costs by buying 'off the shelf' alone or in collaboration with others (Kvalvik and Johansen 2008, 4, 51–57). While all the above strategies have been employed in various combinations, reducing the number of units has been the preferred response.

In parallel with the rising cost of defence equipment, the post-Cold War 'peace dividend' resulted in western countries allocating shrinking shares of their national economies to the armed forces, reducing the overall purchasing power of most western militaries. The defence expenditures of the European member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) decreased from an average of 3.1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1985–89, to 1.7 per cent in 2007 (NATO 2009, 6).<sup>1</sup> The day-to-day tasks of the western armed forces also changed in these years.

During the Cold War most European military forces were homebound, 'unblooded' armies (Nyholm 1997, 396). However, with the upheavals of 1989–91 came a new wave of international military intervention, spearheaded by the western

transatlantic security community (Mayall 2007). European forces, which during the Cold War were intended to 'fight in place', needed to transform in order to be capable of projecting troops and firepower over great distances (Yost 2000-01, 99-100). The challenge of transforming 'peacetime' forces into 'forces in operations' and 'in-place, static forces' into 'deployable forces' proved formidable, and costly, for many European armed forces.

The Nordic states have taken part in these general trends in western defence, both in defence spending and assigned tasks. To address the challenges facing the Nordic states today, they are aiming to cooperate in several areas, including educating officers, developing and purchasing equipment, soldier training, and force deployment for international military operations globally. Enhancing the level of foreign and security policy cooperation among the Nordic countries has also been aired, including concrete issues such as patrolling Iceland's air space and establishing joint consular and diplomatic missions.

This study outlines the move to enhance defence cooperation among the Nordic states after the Cold War. It seeks to explain why and how the Nordic states sought to strengthen their cooperation in the security and defence field, and whether the Nordic states are likely to succeed in their ambitious plans. The study will attempt to answer the question chiefly by examining the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) organisation, what it is, does and aims to do, and ask whether or not the Nordic states are likely to achieve the goals they set themselves when they created this organisation. Each chapter adopts a different perspective on NORDEFECO, discussing different reasons why the venture may or may not succeed.

Now one might legitimately ask why one should care about the defence efforts of the Nordic states. Are they after all not small and relatively peripheral? While it is indeed a commonplace to describe the Nordic countries as 'small states' – a category whose exact definition happens to be hotly disputed nonetheless (Rickli 2008, 308-311; Maass 2009), – when viewed collectively they are anything but insignificant. Seen together they have a population of about 25 million, spend almost \$19 billion on defence annually, and have a combined GDP of \$1.3 trillion, just surpassing Canada and making up the world's tenth largest economy (IISS 2010, 127-128, 152, 183-184, 193; International Monetary Fund 2010).

Furthermore, while the Nordic region is generally seen as a cluster of wealthy, stable, and highly peaceful states, the Nordic countries have nevertheless, or perhaps exactly for that reason, aimed to make a disproportional contribution towards promoting international peace and security (on the Nordic peace, see Archer and Joenniemi 2003). The Nordic states have a long history of providing troops to traditional United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, accounting for about 25 per cent of all such troops during the Cold War (Jakobsen 2006, 10-36). Today



the Nordic states pay approximately 3 per cent of the UN's regular peacekeeping budget annually through assessed contributions (Johnstone 2007, 172), and their voluntary financial contributions make up as much as 40 per cent of the budgets of some specialised UN programmes and agencies (Laatikainen 2003, 410). The Nordic states give about \$15.4 billion annually in development aid and \$1.5 billion in humanitarian aid, or about 10 per cent of the world's official government development assistance and humanitarian aid (OECD 2008, 6; Global Humanitarian Assistance 2010, 21).

	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Norway</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Iceland</b>
Popul. (million)	5,5	4,6	9	5,2	0,3
Territory (km <sup>2</sup> )	43,094	323,802	450,295	338,145	103,000
Economy (\$bn)	41	452	479	274	16.8
Mil. exp. (\$bn)	4.46	5.86	6.06	3.63	0.045
Per cent GDP	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.3
Active troops	26,585	24,025	13,050	22,600	130

**TABLE 1:** The Nordic countries in comparison<sup>3</sup>

While they spend generously on foreign aid, relative spending in each of them on the armed forces has declined continuously since the Cold War, as in the rest of the Euro-Atlantic area. Norwegian and Danish defence expenditure fell from 2.9 and 2.0 per cent of GDP in the late 1980s, to about 1.3 per cent in 2008. Sweden and Finland spent about 3 and 1.5 per cent of their GDP on defence in 1987–88, dropping to 1.3 per cent by 2008 (NATO 2009, 6; IISS 1989, 100).<sup>2</sup> As a result, at least in Norway and Sweden, the increased growth in costs within the defence sector was not entirely compensated for by the budgetary process (Nordlund, Wiklund, and Öström 2009, 73; Norwegian Defence Policy Commission 2007, 31). Since costs within the defence sector tend to rise at least at the rate of GDP, not least labour costs, then even without techflation the Swedish defence sector's purchasing power would have decreased according to an estimate of the Swedish Armed Forces (Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters 2007, 65). In Norway, due to the balance of goods and services the Norwegian Armed Forces purchase, the overall average growth in the price of goods and services exceeded that of the general economy (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2001, 123–124).

The cumulative effect of these factors is dramatic. A study by the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment estimated the effect of 'techflation' and above-average general growth in, e.g. labour costs in the defence sector, and suggested that the purchasing power of the Norwegian Armed Forces could have fallen by as

much as 40 per cent in the period 1990–2005 (Tore Vamraak and Berg-Knutsen 2006, 23). In any case, full compensation would perhaps have been unlikely, given the widely held view that most western states could afford a ‘peace dividend’ after the Cold War.

Techflation and static budgets were not the only challenges the Nordic states had to deal with. They were being faced with demanding and sometimes costly new post-Cold War tasks as well. In 1989, the Nordic peacetime structures were basically a training establishment, where officers were trainers and managers ‘producing’ conscripted soldiers who, after military service, joined the reserve forces which made up the bulk of the armed forces. UN peacekeeping was the closest soldiers came to combat (Frantzen 2005, 153; Børresen, Gjeseth, and Tamnes 2004, 67–68). In 2010, the majority of the active Nordic forces were much better trained and equipped. Some had standing units manned by professional soldiers, and many were regularly deployed on demanding and sometimes dangerous missions overseas alongside their allies and partners.

The present number of Nordic troops deployed abroad is not exceptionally high historically. In fact, all the Nordic countries except Denmark had as many or more troops abroad in 1989 than in 2010 (IISS 1989, 69, 84, 98, 101). However, contemporary tasks are, as we have seen, much more demanding, and therefore much more costly, unlike traditional UN peacekeeping based on consent, impartiality and minimum use of force (Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin 2004, 93–165). At the start of 2010 the Nordic states had almost 3,000 soldiers involved in international military operations. The bulk of these troops were in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Chad (IISS 2010, 127–128, 152, 183–184, 193).

This number is unlikely to fall anytime soon, since the Nordic states are all committed to maintaining their contribution to international security and participating in military operations undertaken by the UN, NATO, the European Union (EU), other international security organisations, and sometimes in *ad hoc* coalitions of willing states. Such participation is now therefore identified as a key task for the armed forces in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Both Denmark and Sweden aim to be able to maintain about 2,000 troops in international military operations, while Norway and Finland are looking at keeping an unspecified, but somewhat smaller, number of troops abroad (Danish Ministry of Defence 2009, 6; Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a, 42; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2008; Finnish Prime Minister’s Office 2009b).<sup>4</sup> While not possessing armed forces as such, Iceland nevertheless also aims to provide trained individuals for peacekeeping and peace-building missions through the Iceland Crisis Response Unit (ICRU), which numbered about 30 positions in the field during 2007 (Iceland Crisis Response Unit 2008, 6–7). Iceland also helps shoulder the financial burden

of such missions by contributing to NATO's budget as well as directly towards the costs of other countries' international military operations. For example, when Turkey deployed Black Hawk helicopters to Afghanistan in 2005, Iceland and Luxembourg joined together in paying for their deployment (Shea 2005, 12).

Faced with the challenge of techflation, the post-Cold War 'peace dividend' and increasing demands for costly international military operations abroad, most western countries have responded by downsizing their forces. The number active soldiers in NATO member states fell from nearly 6 million in 1985, to 3.5 million in 2007, even as the Alliance enlarged from 16 to 28 member countries (NATO 2009, 9). The Nordic states are again no exception. As a result of their own rising costs and falling purchasing power, force size in the Nordic countries has largely followed the general western trend of rapid downscaling. The number of active duty troops in the Nordic countries has nearly halved, from about 160 000 in 1989, to about 85 000 in 2010 (IISS 1989, 69, 83, 97, 100; 2010, 126, 150, 182, 192). The reduction in Nordic reserve forces is even more dramatic. If one disregards the lightly armed Home Guard, inactive reserve forces have fallen by more than 90 per cent in all of the Nordic states except Finland.

However, while subject to many of the same cost-challenges as small states, large states such as the United Kingdom, France and Germany, do have one significant advantage. The size of their armed forces still allows them to field a *national* support apparatus to equip, train and support their armed forces if they so choose. The smaller European countries are forced to do the same, but on a much smaller scale. As a result small states are now approaching the point at which they will find it increasingly difficult to retain 'balanced' and 'full-fledged' armed forces with the full-range of 'normal' military capabilities. As the armed forces shrink in size, some of their military capabilities become so small, they are no longer cost-effective, and may not even be technically viable. When this happens, the capability is said to have gone below 'critical mass'.<sup>5</sup> As the Swedish Chief of Defence, General Sverker Göranson, argues, 'it's easy for a big nations like the United States, with many aircraft and other stuff,' but, he goes on, 'we have much less, so we have to find different ways of doing this' (Muradian 2009).

A proposed remedy for this problem has been to increase international cooperation in defence. Indeed, since the end of the Cold War the Nordic countries have been developing ways of cutting costs including wider international cooperation and closer inter-Nordic cooperation within the defence sector. Again, this is in no way a uniquely Nordic response. Even the larger European states, which are not immediately in danger of going below critical mass for most of their capabilities, have moved to widen their international cooperation. As the UK Ministry of Defence noted in a 2010 Green Paper:

Further integrating our capabilities with those of our key partners and allies [...] would place limits on our ability to act nationally. But it would deliver a more effective contribution to international security (United Kingdom Ministry of Defence 2010, 9–10).

As a way for the UK to address rising costs, cooperating more extensively with France has been proposed, for instance on such sensitive issues as joint nuclear-submarine patrols (Mayer 2010). NATO and the EU have both been advocating more cooperation and harmonisation across countries as well. NATO's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen is calling for greater equipment harmonisation, questioning whether 'we really need so many different types of infantry combat vehicles, or radios, or helicopters?' while remarking that 'it makes no sense for Europe to have 16 naval shipyards and 12 separate manufactures of armoured vehicles' (Hale 2010). General Håkan Syrén, Chairman of the EU military Committee, agrees: there is 'an obvious need to rationalise' he says, and it 'is not just a matter of better management; it has direct implications for the safety of our soldiers' (Tigner 2010, 34).

Current Nordic attempts to work more closely together on security and defence matters is not the first time inter-Nordic cooperation has been on the cards. Previous attempts to work together at the 'high politics'<sup>6</sup> level have, however, met with limited success. Following the meeting of the Nordic foreign ministers in Reykjavik in March 2010 the ministers wrote in joint article, 'it is also a fact that [Nordic cooperation] is characterised by lots of good intentions but perhaps less by concrete action' (Espersen et al. 2010). This admission represents a quite common view of Nordic ambitions for 'high politics' cooperation, although one not usually expressed by political leaders. Since the Second World War the region has excelled at practical, functional, 'low politics' cooperation in areas like labour migration, cultural exchange and the Nordic passport union. However, equally successful examples of cooperation to ensure vital national interests and national security have been few and far between (Schiller 1984). Is the present momentum towards cooperation on defence and security policy likely to prove the exception to the rule?

Chapter 1 in this study adopts a historical view, provides the historical background for the evolution of Nordic military cooperation up to the founding of NORDEF. Chapter 2 deals with the disparate membership of the Nordic states in international security organisations, and argues that rather than being an obstacle to Nordic cooperation, it is an opportunity. Chapter 3 adopts a regional perspective on the Nordic area. It outlines the very different conceptions of the Nordic governments to regional threats and challenges, explaining why they are both unable and unwilling to adopt a unified Nordic approach to security and defence in their home region. Chapter 4 outlines a practical view of cooperation, and the impact of past and future

cooperative efforts of the Nordic states. As long as the Nordic states are reassured that they are not committing themselves to dangerous dependencies, Nordic cooperation is an eminently logical way to preserve and generate military capability in the face of economic and operational pressures.

Chapter 5 looks at cooperation from the vantage point of the Nordic armed forces, and argues that the core of the group is Norway and Sweden, whose defence structures are somewhat similar. Finland is an enthusiastic participant, but has a very different military structure; Denmark is eminently suitable as a partner, but is less interested in Nordic cooperation than the others; Iceland is limited in its participation due to its lack of proper armed forces. Finally, Chapter 6 adopts a domestic perspective on cooperation, arguing that some of the most pressing obstacles to effective Nordic military cooperation may be domestic reactions to unfair distribution of gains in NORDEFECO and general opposition to moving jobs abroad. Another likely obstacle is complications from having to take account of defence industrial policies in the different Nordic lands. Certain domestic political constellations will favour Nordic cooperation more than others. Finally, Chapter 7 attempts to summarise the arguments and findings, and add a concluding remark on NORDEFECO's future.



# A brief history of NORDEFCO

During the Second World War Norwegian and Danish troops were trained in Sweden, with the active aid of the Swedish Armed Forces, in anticipation of the liberation of their countries from German occupation (Skogrand 2004, 93–97; Frantzen, Clemmesen, and Friis 2008, 261–262). However, during the Cold War close security and defence cooperation in a Nordic setting was made difficult by the different alignments of the Nordic states; Denmark, Norway and Iceland having joined NATO in 1949, while Sweden and Finland were nonaligned. Negotiations had been undertaken in 1948–49 for a Scandinavian defence union, but the idea came to naught (Sverdrup 1996, 303–341; Bjereld, Johansson, and Molin 2008, 94–111). The ambit of the Nordic Council, established in 1952, was therefore restricted to non-security related cooperation. A highly successful practical partnership nevertheless developed under the Nordic Council, including the Nordic passport union, Nordic labour market, cooperation on education and science, and several cultural exchange programmes (Eriksen and Pharo 1997, 147–168; Eriksen 1999, 139–142).

Despite their different security policy alignments, Denmark, Norway and Sweden cooperated informally on military matters, particularly intelligence and air operations (Eriksen 1999, 142–145; Petersson 2006; Petersson 2003). The Nordic states also jointly pioneered ‘traditional’ UN peacekeeping operations during the Cold War, providing about 25 per cent of the personnel serving in UN peacekeeping missions in the period, and cooperating closely in New York and in the field (Jakobsen 2006, 10–45). After the end of the East–West confrontation, the Nordic states were therefore able to draw on a legacy of cooperation to deepen their military partnership, and the new functional military partnerships which developed often came to mirror areas where there had been informal cooperation during the Cold War (Petersson 2010c, 254).

In 1991, as the Cold War came to a definitive end, the Nordic states lifted the taboo on discussing foreign policy in the Nordic Council. Sweden's and Finland's increased freedom of manoeuvre in foreign policy was an important reason for this (Eriksen 1999, 145–147). Following both countries' entry into NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994, the Nordic states established the Nordic Armaments Co-operation (NORDAC) to coordinate development and procurement programmes. They also sought to enhance coordination and cooperation in the growing number of peace support operations by establishing a Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS) in 1997, which replaced the system of Nordic cooperation on UN peacekeeping that had existed for much of the Cold War. NORDCAPS offered joint Nordic training for peace support operations, as well as coordinated Nordic contributions to capacity building and security sector reform in weak and developing states.

However, while deemed a success by the Nordic governments, many of the initial cost cutting measures such as procuring major equipment systems and deploying jointly did not succeed entirely according to expectations. For example, in September 2001, Denmark abandoned the Standard Nordic Helicopter Programme and selected the AgustaWestland EH101 helicopter, rather than the NHIndustries NH90 selected by Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Viking submarine project also proved divisive. Finland was never a member, Norway went from participant to observer status in 2003, and Denmark withdrew altogether in 2004 when the country ceased having submarines (Hagelin 2006, 169–171).

Attempts at larger-scale joint deployments under NORDCAPS also proved difficult. In 1995 the Nordic states deployed a Nordic–Polish brigade to Bosnia as part of NATO's Implementation Force (Gjeseth 2008, 163–164). This was the first time formerly neutral Sweden and Finland had participated in a NATO mission, and was considered as a possible model for future deployments (Dörfer 1997, 53–56). However, while the Nordic states did initially establish a force-catalogue under NORDCAPS in 2003, with the aim of enabling them to deploy a brigade-sized force for international operations, this goal was abandoned along with the force pool in 2006. Nordic participation in other multinational forces, such as the EU battle-groups and NATO's Response Force, seemed to make such a Nordic force obsolete (Jakobsen 2007, 460–461). The Danish-led Multinational Stand-by High Readiness Brigade for UN Operations, known as SHIRBRIG, which had a heavy Nordic presence, was also deactivated in 2008 (Ritzau [Danish news agency] 2008). By the late 2000s the main military activities under a purely *Nordic* framework were training, capability enhancement and security sector reform efforts in Africa, the Balkans and Ukraine (Ulriksen 2007b, 556–557). However, the spiralling costs of modern military equipment, combined with shrinking force size, would neces-



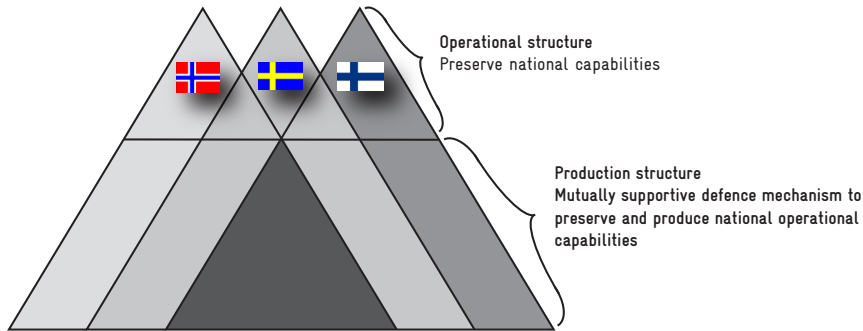
sitate further money saving measures, i.e. by pursuing wider inter-Nordic military cooperation.

Two separate national studies by the armed forces of Norway and Sweden in 2007 identified rising costs and the shrinking of some parts of their force structures as key challenges to their armed forces, and emphasised cooperation with their Nordic neighbours as a possible remedy (Norwegian Chief of Defence 2007, 63–65; Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters 2007, 63–72). In the summer of 2007 the armed forces of Norway and Sweden published a joint study outlining a partnership to increase cost-effectiveness and enable their militaries to retain the full range of military capabilities. Apart from the above-average increase in the cost of military equipment, the ‘critical mass’ problematique was identified as the chief challenge facing the Norwegian and Swedish armed forces. Critical mass was defined as ‘the volume which allows a structural element to be developed, maintained, trained and operationally employed’ (Norwegian and Swedish Chiefs of Defence 2007, 1), and the term extended to materiel, personnel, know-how, and whole military units. The envisaged cooperation would aim not to reduce national freedom of action, and would be a complement rather than competitor to the countries’ close cooperation within NATO and the EU (Norwegian and Swedish Chiefs of Defence 2007).

The report was followed up in June 2008 by a joint Norwegian–Swedish–Finnish report outlining 140 areas of military cooperation, about 40 of which should be initiated by the end of 2009 (NORDSUP 2008b). The 2008 report used strong language to describe the options open to the Nordic countries:

Given the loss of purchasing power, small and medium sized countries will not be able in the close future to sustain complete and balanced armed forces. To put it somewhat simplified we face two options: either to share capabilities with strategic partners on a bilateral or multilateral basis or to face a future with fewer capabilities (NORDSUP 2008b, 1).

By harmonising equipment and training of the Nordic armed forces, as well as co-ordinating and conducting joint logistics, support and force production, Norway, Sweden and Finland hoped to preserve as much as possible of their operational military capabilities. As far as Norway is concerned, the Norwegian Chief of Defence Sverre Diesen argued, ‘it is fundamentally about realizing that a population of 4 ½ million is too small to maintain a purely national defence [capability] in our time’ (Diesen 2008b).



**FIGURE 1:** The NORDSUP idea. Source: NORDSUP. Nordic Supportive Defence Structures (NORDSUP) - Progress Report, 4.

The same month as the NORDSUP report was published, the foreign ministers of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland were meeting in Luxemburg. They asked former Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg to lead an inquiry into the possibility of enhancing foreign and security policy cooperation between the Nordic countries. The Stoltenberg report was received by the Nordic foreign ministers with much fanfare at an Oslo press conference, February 2009 (Stoltenberg 2009b). While the report covered many areas beyond mere defence cooperation, such as maritime surveillance, the Arctic and cooperation among the foreign services, it nevertheless had defence and security issues at its core.

Particularly noteworthy was its proposal for a Nordic 'mutual declaration of solidarity', whereby the Nordic countries would issue a mutual commitment outlining how they would react if one of the Nordic states became the victim of some form of 'external attack or undue pressure' (Stoltenberg 2009b, 34). The declaration was necessary in Stoltenberg's view because 'it would be difficult to co-operate on developing Nordic military capabilities without first having clarified at policy level how they will be deployed in a crisis situation' (Stoltenberg 2009a). While the form of the declaration should not prejudice existing obligations of the Nordic countries to the UN, EU or NATO, a mutual guarantee would nevertheless push Nordic defence cooperation beyond the technical-military level and propel it into the realm of high-politics.

In November 2008, as follow up to the June report, Norway, Sweden and Finland were joined by Denmark and Iceland in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the Nordic Supportive Defence Structures (NORDSUP) as a formal organisation (NORDSUP 2008a). By bringing Iceland and Denmark into the new structure, NORDSUP became a truly Nordic cooperation. The NORDSUP Steering Committee held its first meeting in Helsinki in January 2009, when Finland assumed the chairmanship. A key goal of the Finnish chair-

manship was to create an overarching structure encompassing all aspects of Nordic defence cooperation (Finnish Ministry of Defence 2009). This was accomplished in November 2009, when the Nordic ministers of defence met in Helsinki to sign a MoU establishing NORDEFECO (NORDEFECO 2009). The new organisation created a common institutional structure out of NORDSUP, NORDCAPS, and NORDAC.

NORDEFECO has an annually rotating chairmanship; held by Norway in 2010. The role of chair includes responsibility to call, supervise and report meetings. All decision-making is based on consensus, but a country can choose to 'opt out' of an activity or project, in which case the other participants can commit themselves freely to that activity or project (Nordic Defence Policy Steering Committee 2009). Those choosing to 'opt out' are free later to join all elements of the cooperation. Thus NORDEFECO will enable and in fact encourage integration *à la carte*, where participants are free to pick and choose projects in which to get involved.

At the political level, the Ministers of Defence will meet at least twice a year, as will the Chiefs of Defence.<sup>7</sup> State Secretaries or Permanent Secretaries will meet at least once a year. The NORDEFECO Steering Group, consisting of officials at director general or deputy permanent secretary of state for defence level, will have more of the day-to-day responsibility for running NORDEFECO, and will 'steer, identify, develop, implement and monitor activities' (NORDEFECO 2009, 4). It will in turn task the Military Coordination Committee, which will consist of officials at the strategic military level. The Committee will seek to coordinate, implement and monitor military-level issues, as well as provide the steering group with military advice.<sup>8</sup> The NORDCAPS Steering Group used to meet two or three, and the Military Coordination Committee, four to six times a year (Jakobsen 2006, 213–214). Now that there is instead a NORDEFECO Steering Group and a Military Coordination Committee, the regularity and agenda of the meetings are likely to increase.

NORDEFECO's military organisation is subdivided into five cooperation areas, each with a responsible 'lead-nation'. The areas are Strategic Development (Sweden); Capabilities (Finland); Human Resources & Education (Denmark); Training & Exercises (Norway); and Operations (Sweden) (NORDEFECO/NORDCAPS 2010). Unlike the chairmanship of NORDEFECO, which rotates annually, lead nation responsibilities will rotate on a biannual basis in order to foster continuity and focus within each area.<sup>9</sup>

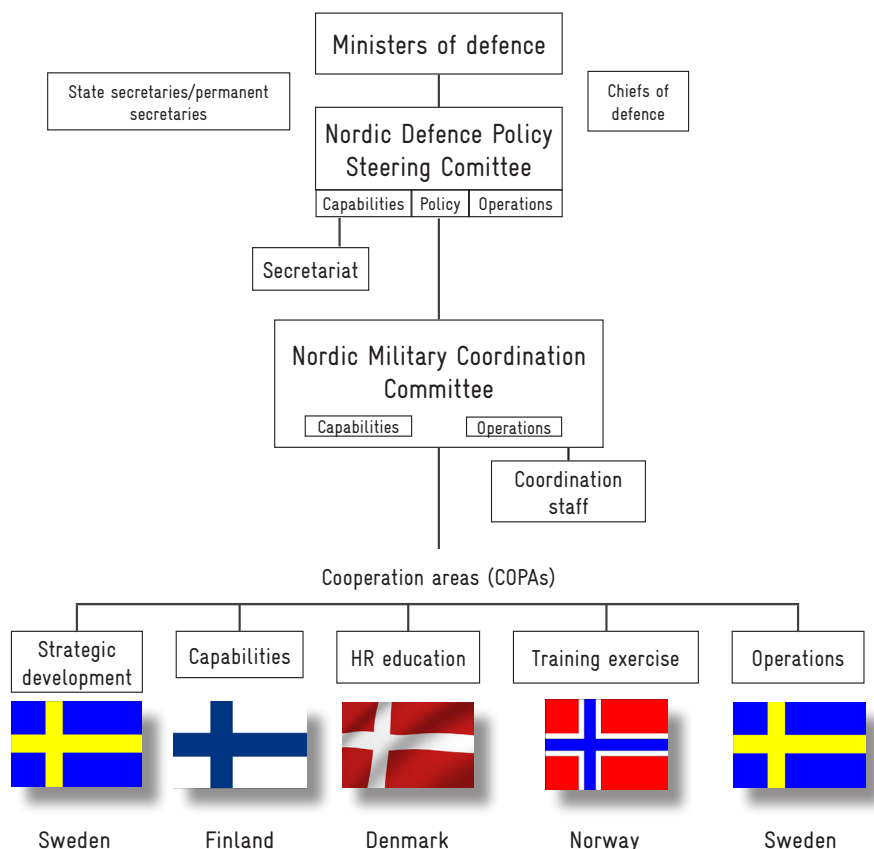


FIGURE 2: NORDEFECO Organisation. (Source: Norwegian Ministry of Defence.)

This structure replaced the six multilateral working groups that existed in NORDSUP, dealing with land, sea, air, logistics, human resources, and analysis and development, each in turn with numerous subgroups (NORDSUP 2008b, 2–3). It also replaced and absorbed NORDAC’s 44 different groups (as they were in 2008) dealing with investigation, co-operation, projects and pre-projects. Although most met very infrequently, if at all, there was nevertheless an impressive range of ongoing and potential projects (NORDAC Co-ordination Group 2008).

Finally, the new organisation incorporated NORDCAPS’ structure and working groups, as well as the almost 30 training courses for Nordic and non-Nordic participants in the conduct of international peace support operations (NORDEFECO/NORDCAPS 2010). However, NORDCAPS’ small permanent multilateral planning element, based in Stockholm, which worked full-time on planning and co-ordination, would not be continued. Instead, a new NORDEFECO Coordination Staff would be based in the national capitals, coordinating activities from there (Franzén

2010 [conversation]). Norway, Sweden and Finland also exchange liaison officers, who are embedded within the integrated Norwegian Ministry of Defence, the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters, and the Finnish Defence Command. Denmark also dispatched one officer to the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters, but not to its counterparts in Helsinki or Oslo (Anonymous 5 [Interview]; Ericsson 2010 [Interview]; Andersen 2010 [Interview]). By exchanging officers the Nordic countries aimed to ease and facilitate cooperation across the full-range of cooperation areas (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2010).

The new unified organisation officially started work in December 2009, though it would take months before the three original organisations actually became fully integrated and began working properly. Nevertheless, expectations were high, and not just within the governments and the armed forces, but among the informed members of the Nordic public as well. The momentum towards closer Nordic defence cooperation had received quite a bit of media attention, particularly the Stoltenberg report, and as a consequence much of the Nordic public was aware that *something* was going on with regards to foreign, security and defence policy cooperation among the Nordic states.



# NORDEFECO and the European security institutions

One of the most frequent criticisms of Nordic defence cooperation is that it will not work due to dissimilar membership of European security organisations. After all, this was one of the key reasons why this form of cooperation was said to be next to impossible during the Cold War (Riste 2001, 247–255). On the surface it is a powerful argument, since the Nordic states formally retain the same security policy orientation they pursued during the Cold War.

For most of the Cold War, NATO member states Norway, Denmark and Iceland were bound by the North Atlantic Treaty, signed in Washington D.C., April 1949. The most important aspect of this treaty was Article 5, which states that ‘an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all’ (NATO 2001, 528).<sup>10</sup> Finland and Sweden, although formally bound by the UN Security Council decisions under Chapter VII, dealing with ‘Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Act of Aggression’ (UN 2006, 27), nevertheless planned for neutrality in wartime for the duration of the Cold War (Winnerstig 2001, 76–77; Sivonen 2001, 92–93). In any case, the deadlock in the Security Council for most of the Cold War made the UN an impotent collective security organisation (Mayall 2007, 6–11; Roberts and Zaum 2008).

As of 2010, Norway, Denmark and Iceland are still members of NATO, an alliance now numbering 28 countries in North America and Europe, while Sweden and Finland remain nonaligned countries. The two latter countries have, however, joined the EU, which has become increasingly important in the defence field after the Cold War, and which is viewed by both Sweden and Finland as a key organisa-

tion for maintaining European security. Norway and Iceland remain, however, non-members of the EU, and Denmark, while a member, has chosen to 'opt out' of EU defence-related cooperation. Can these differences be reconciled within a joint Nordic defence and security design, or are they insurmountable obstacles?

One could argue that the present situation offers a poor opportunity for integrating the armed forces of the Nordic states. After all, sovereign states do not create shared military capabilities unless they can be absolutely certain they will be available when needed. Even among allied countries, such integration has often proven exceedingly difficult.<sup>11</sup> On the surface, the security policy situation put in place in 1949 remains in place in 2010, over two decades after the collapse of the bipolar 'overlay' in Europe (Buzan et al. 1990, 36–41).<sup>12</sup> Only three of the five Nordic states are formally allies, and pronounced differences exist with regard to security organisation membership, further complicating defence cooperation among the Nordic countries.

However, such a formalistic view of security policy ignores the fact that *practical* security policy has changed significantly in all the Nordic states. The so-called 'Nordic Balance' no longer exists (Brundtland 1965). Sweden and Finland have both drawn considerably nearer to the Western alliance, and ceased using the term 'neutrality in wartime'.<sup>13</sup> This change was facilitated by the altered intentional environment after the Cold War.

In 1992, Finland negotiated a new bilateral treaty with Moscow. This replaced the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance which Finland had been coerced into signing with the Soviet Union in 1948. The treaty had obliged Finland 'not to conclude any alliance or join any coalition' directed against the Soviet Union, defend its territory from being used by 'Germany or any state allied with the latter' to attack the USSR, as well as 'if necessary' to conduct military consultation with and receive military aid from Moscow under the aforementioned circumstances (Meinander 2006, 188–190, 227).<sup>14</sup> In 1994, Sweden and Finland both became active participants in NATO's PfP, which meant increasing harmonisation of their defence forces with those of NATO countries through their participation in the NATO PfP Planning and Review Process. Finally, as we have seen, in 1995, Swedish and Finnish forces joined for the first time a NATO-led enforcement mission in the Balkans, i.e. the Implementation Force in Bosnia (Dörfer 1997, 40–56; Dörfer 2007, 130).

Sweden's and Finland's membership of the EU the same year also had implications for their security policy, especially following the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in 1999.<sup>15</sup> Swedish and Finnish documents now refer to the EU as a 'political alliance' (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a, 17; Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2009a, 72), and both countries support the deep-



ening of the CSDP. Both also welcome the new solidarity clause in the Lisbon Treaty obliging member states to give aid in case an EU state is the victim of 'armed aggression on its territory' (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a, 17–18; Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2009b, 26–35).<sup>16</sup> Since currently 21 out of 27 EU member states are also NATO members,<sup>17</sup> EU membership therefore ties Sweden and Finland increasingly into the existing transatlantic security community. The increasingly close *de facto* security orientation by Sweden and Finland towards NATO would seem to suggest relatively few security policy obstacles in the way of closer cooperation by the Nordic countries; ultimately, the relationship of Sweden and Finland with NATO seems to be 'to accept almost everything else in the field of security cooperation except collective defence' (Forsberg and Vaahtoranta 2001, 68). On an operational level, such as exchanging data or joint exercises, things would be easier if they were NATO members, but their non-membership is not a showstopper.<sup>18</sup>

Norway and Iceland have also developed much of the same relationship with the CSDP as Sweden and Finland with NATO: almost full participation despite non-membership. Norway in particular has been actively involved as a third country in CSDP, has played a constructive part in furthering CSDP, and sought influence through participation rather than obstruction; i.e. the country has not complicated CSDP–NATO relations as Turkey has done (Græger 2002, 44–55; Tofte 2003). Norway has become an active partner of the European Defence Agency (EDA), having signed an Administrative Arrangement with EDA in 2006, and has 'opted in' to a number of EDA projects. Norway continues to seek to deepen its cooperation with the agency (Lindbäck 2009). Iceland has also been taking an active part in CSDP matters, despite its small size and highly limited means. Among other things, the country has been making its ICRU available for EU operations since 2001 (Bailes and Thorhallsson 2006).

The main problem with Norwegian and Icelandic non-membership of the EU is that they are sometimes unable to take part in intra-EU cooperation and groups. However, Nordic cooperation could actually be a way for Norway and Iceland to penetrate these groups and projects (Norwegian Ministry of Government Administration and Reform, 22). It would give Norway and Iceland access to the EU, and Sweden and Finland access to NATO, both identified by the Nordic governments as one of the key advantages of Nordic defence cooperation (see e.g. Norwegian Ministry of Government Administration and Reform, 24).

Of the Nordic countries only Denmark, which only accepted the Maastricht Treaty in May 1993 after receiving several reservations, remained detached from those parts of the CSDP dealing with defence issues (Svensson 1994, 70–77). One key consequence of the Danish opt-out is that Denmark is unable to take part in European defence cooperation, with corresponding loss of influence on European

security and defence issues. A concrete problem for Nordic defence cooperation has been Denmark's inability to take part in the Nordic battlegroup, to which Sweden, Norway and Finland (as well as Estonia and Ireland) are active contributors (DIIS 2008, 57–69). Incidentally, Denmark is also the only Nordic country where the ability to 'plug into' either NATO or the EU is not considered one of the advantages of Nordic defence cooperation; as Denmark is a member of both organisations, this argument for cooperation does not apply to Denmark (Jakobsen 2006, 219).

The Danish opt-outs also seem to have hampered Nordic defence cooperation at a more general level. The defence opt-out was invoked by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs as one reason for Denmark to decline to participate at the initial meeting on defence cooperation by the Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish foreign ministers in October 2007 (Norwegian News Agency and Ritzau [Danish news agency] 2007). However, Denmark subsequently decided that the cooperation did not violate its reservations against European defence policy. In June 2008, Denmark joined the other Nordic countries in calling for what became the Stoltenberg Report (Stoltenberg 2009b, 5), and Denmark subsequently signed both the NORDSUP MoU in November 2008 and the NORDEFECO MoU in November 2009 (NORDSUP 2008a; NORDEFECO 2009).

To sum up, Sweden and Finland have very few de facto reservations against practical cooperation with NATO, Norway and Iceland have as few against the CSDP, and Denmark has only to avoid Nordic cooperation whenever EU defence issues are involved. In other words, the disparate memberships of the Nordic countries in these organisations present few seemingly insuperable problems. In fact, the most commonly noted effect of Nordic cooperation is as a way to overcome the disadvantages stemming from disparate Nordic memberships of these organisations. By cooperating closely with the Nordic NATO countries, Sweden and Finland could achieve greater influence in NATO, and Norway and Iceland would gain as much influence in the EU through Sweden, Finland and Denmark. These disparate memberships could therefore make for 'constructive asymmetry', according to Norwegian State Secretary for Defence, Espen Barth Eide (Härnqvist 2008, 33).

The only way NORDEFECO's relations with NATO and the EU could become problematic is if it tried to be an *alternative* rather than a *supplement* to these organisations. The ambition has always been for Nordic cooperation to do the latter, providing a 'supplemental approach in providing the capabilities and forces required by [NATO and the EU]' (NORDSUP 2008b, 1). The Nordic countries stress that enhanced regional cooperation is in line with wider European developments. However, there are those who argue that what NORDEFECO aims to do is better handled directly through NATO or the EU because duplication is a real risk. According to Magnus Petersson, NORDEFECO may be encroaching on areas that are

already handled by NATO and CSDP/EDA. If so, it risks creating duplicating structures that might lead to a less, rather than more, efficient utilization of resources (Petersson 2010c; Petersson 2010a). And as Tuomas Forsberg also points out, the pressure to find better cost-effective solutions for Nordic defence could just as easily be dealt with within a European or transatlantic setting, where the potential for utilizing 'economies of scale' is even greater than in the Nordic setting (Forsberg 2010, 134). Indeed, NATO and the EU have undertaken a number of capability building and improvement schemes, some of which the Nordic states have found it worthwhile to join.

On strategic air lift, Europe's perhaps greatest capability shortfall, twelve EU states have joined together to pool services and transport aircraft in the European Air Transport Fleet. It is to be developed in the period 2014–17, and will include joint purchasing, providing and exchanging flying hours, as well as pooling support functions. NATO has taken measures of its own under the NATO Airlift Management Organisation, which ten NATO states, including Norway, have joined, plus Finland and Sweden. Based in Hungary, the organisation operates three internationally manned C-17 aircraft, performing airlift missions for NATO, EU and UN operations (IISS 2009, 152–155). Remarkably, despite being a NATO project, Sweden is second only to the US in its purchase of flight hours from the C-17s. The unit Deputy Commander is Swedish, as are ten of its pilots and fifteen of its air and ground personnel (FMV 2010, 19).

A lack of unmanned aerial vehicles is another European capability shortfall. NATO is looking to remedy this by drawing on its experience of Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS). Since the 1980s, NATO has successfully maintained a fleet of AWACS aircraft, paid for jointly by the alliance and manned by multinational crews. NATO is now using this model to acquire a pooled ground surveillance system, based on the RQ-4 Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle. The fifteen participating nations include Norway and, prior to withdrawing in June 2010, Denmark, though no non-NATO Nordic countries have joined so far (Northrop Grumman 2009; Lauritzen and Vangkilde 2010). EDA has also been trying to address one of the most pressing force-generation problems facing the European armed forces, that of deploying more helicopters to international military operations. It has been doing so by trying to coordinate research and development efforts, as well as by promoting harmonisation of equipment requirements and collaborative procurements (IISS 2009, 152–155). The agency has also undertaken an Advanced European Jet Pilot Training programme, with a view to having initial operating capacity by 2017–18. It will include sharing flight hours on simulators and flight training between nations (EDD 2010a, 4).

These are all good examples of the EU and NATO's pursuit of projects simi-

lar in nature to those envisaged by NORDEFECO, such as joint acquisitions, equipment harmonisation, joint training and education. However, when asked why they chose not to pursue a wide tranche of NORDEFECO's portfolio in a European or a transatlantic setting, both of which are larger with even better economies of scale than NORDEFECO, Swedish, Finnish, and to a lesser extent, Norwegian defence officials respond that NATO, and especially the EU, are too slow, large, heterogeneous and cumbersome (Anonymous 5 [interview]; Ericsson 2010 [interview]; Toveri 2010 [interview]; Anonymous 4 [interview]). The small size and similar decision-making culture of the Nordic countries means that 'everybody knows one another', can communicate regularly and rapidly, and often make decisions in a speedy and un-bureaucratic fashion (Sallinen 2010 [interview]). Going all out for NATO and/or the EU is the backup solution if NORDEFECO fails, but as a primary solution these organisations are not seen as the ideal way of cutting costs quickly at the moment.

For Sweden, the EU would be the obvious choice, but it too is seen as too large and too slow to be a feasible alternative to NORDEFECO (Anonymous 5 [interview]; Ericsson 2010 [interview]). The alternative for Sweden is to 'muddle through', making painful cuts in the support structure of the armed forces and free resources for operational forces and investments (Dalsjö 2010 [interview]). For Norway, the alternative is closer cooperation with other NATO countries. Here, the 'Nord Sea Strategy' is particularly apt. It provides for cooperation with Denmark, the Netherlands, Great Britain and Germany (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2008, 31). However, Norway has had limited success inducing these countries into bilateral partnerships (Anonymous 4 [interview]). The size of two latter states make for very unbalanced relationships, and both have limited equipment commonality with the Norwegian Armed Forces. Denmark is similar in many ways, but difficult to attract into a partnership (Dahl et al. 2007, 26–27, 30). Only the Netherlands stands out as both a willing and able partner, and then primarily for the Norwegian Army (Olsen 2010b, 12–14).

Surprisingly, Finnish defence officials cite NATO as Finland's best second cooperation choice should NORDEFECO stall or fail altogether. The EU is seen as too heterogeneous, slow moving, and based in any case on NATO standards. However, since NATO is a difficult political issue for Finland, this need not be the final political decision, at least not overtly (Toveri 2010 [interview]; Sallinen 2010 [interview]). However, given Finland's lack of membership in NATO, as well as limited confidence in the EU as an effective arena for defence cooperation, Nordic cooperation stands out as country's best option.

For Iceland, which does not take part in NORDEFECO's military wing, the alternative would be to focus more on NATO and bilateral ties with the US, UK, Denmark and Norway. The ICRU, Iceland Defence Agency and Coast Guard already enjoys

excellent ties with the Norwegian and Danish Armed Forces on procurement, education and training (Guðnason 2010 [interview]; Hafstein 2010 [interview]; Bailes 2010 [conversation]). Since the US has had little interest in Icelandic security since the Cold War (Jóhannesson 2004, 128–133), and security ties with the UK have been weakened by the fallout over Iceland's banking crisis, Iceland is reaching out to its chief Nordic partners Norway and Denmark (Ingimundarson 2009, 76; 2008, 80–84). That they are all members of NATO makes this a comfortable arrangement, and means the de-facto trilateral Nordic cooperation (Iceland–Norway–Denmark) in the North Atlantic does not in any way come into conflict with the Atlantic Alliance.

For Denmark alone, NORDEFCO has not been the first choice in addressing its defence-economic challenges. It has opted instead to cut capacities wholesale and specialise in expeditionary operations within NATO and alongside the US and UK. Maintaining NATO and the EU, and securing Danish influence in and through these organisations, is the objective.<sup>19</sup> Denmark has also differed most from the others in its view of Nordic security challenges. While Russia's resurgence is unlikely to change this (Jakobsen 2009), America's relative decline, the coming of a more multipolar world, the melting of the polar ice and opening of the Danish (Greenland) Arctic areas to oil and gas exploration and extraction, may force the Danish Armed Forces to focus more on sovereignty protection and military crisis management missions at home and in the North Atlantic (Rasmussen 2009, 15–21). However, for the moment, Denmark looks set to participate in NORDEFCO on a merely ad hoc basis.

Precisely because it is seen as a fast-moving and thus *avant-garde venture*, most Nordic officials are very pleased with Nordic defence cooperation's very favourable reception in the transatlantic security community (Härnqvist 2008, 33). Initially, Washington was sceptical about the intentions of Nordic defence cooperation. While pleased with its potential to generate more capabilities for NATO and EU missions, Washington was nevertheless concerned that it could also reflect a shift away from NATO by the Centre-Left Norwegian government, as well as weakening the chances for the F-35 as Norway's next fighter aircraft (Hilde 2010 [conversation]; Norwegian News Agency 2010). However, according to Norway's Chief of Defence General Harald Sunde, NORDEFCO is currently being met with enthusiasm, both in Europe and North America, as an example of practical military cooperation between NATO and non-NATO members (Arnulf 2010, 10). Indeed, other regions are looking at the model for close Nordic defence cooperation with interest, says Swedish Minister of Defence Tolgfors (O'Dwyer 2009b). 'Nordic countries have shown the way' argues a senior EDA official (Zandee 2010, 31). In the Balkans, NORDEFCO has been praised and held forth as an initiative the region should seek to emulate (Voinea and Bălăceanu 2009). The Baltic states have already expressed their desire

to join (O'Dwyer 2009d). Thus, Nordic cooperation is not viewed as a competitor by other EU or NATO states, rather as a model-type of regional cooperation.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, as the Chairman of the EU Military Committee, General Håkan Syrén, argues, because moving ahead with all 27 countries has been so demanding, 'we must find, I would say, clusters, groups of countries, encourage them to work together, and that is a good start' (EDD 2010b, 3).

Were the EU or NATO to develop projects duplicating those of NORDEFECO, the latter could be discontinued or merged with the larger organisations'. This was done with the NORDCAPS force pool, which was deactivated in 2006 due to functional overlap with the Nordic EU battlegroup (Jakobsen 2007, 460). The Nordic states could also cooperate on joint acquisitions, maintenance and training with other northern European states, either individually or collectively. That there is an interest for such cooperation was apparent when Britain, Poland and Germany chose to participate at the November 2010 Nordic-Baltic defence minister meeting in Oslo (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2010c). The same month Sweden and Germany published a 'food for thought' paper entitled 'Intensifying Military Cooperation in Europe', which was first discussed at the meeting of EU defence ministers at Ghent, September 2010. The proposition largely echoed the 2007 Norwegian-Swedish initiative, from which NORDSUP eventually evolved. It called upon clusters of EU member states 'to identify adequate partners for cooperation in specific areas', with EDA and other EU bodies acting as facilitators and co-ordinators. Nordic cooperation could easily proceed on such a 'cooperative cluster' basis within the Ghent initiative (German and Swedish ministries of defence 2010).

However, to avoid NORDEFECO growing too large and cumbersome, and losing its present edge as a smaller and nimbler organisation than those it seeks to complement, NORDEFECO's membership should probably not be enlarged too much or too quickly. A good case can therefore be made to keep the Baltic states, as well as any other would-be applicants, as partners rather than full-fledged NORDEFECO members, at least for the time being. The Nordic states would nevertheless be able to strengthen their defence-related cooperation with the Baltic states, for instance by implementing the recommendations of the Nordic and Baltic countries' (NB8) Wise Men report of August 2010 (Danish and Latvian Ministries of Foreign Affairs 2010, 11-12). If NORDEFECO is a success it will be seen as a natural candidate for a new 'cluster group' of countries cooperating closely on defence within Europe, and, probably, also widely seen as a model other countries might emulate.

# Is there a shared Nordic security outlook?

Based on his conversations with politicians in all of the Nordic countries, Torvald Stoltenberg began his 2009 report by articulating 'a widespread desire in all the Nordic countries to strengthen Nordic cooperation' and also 'a widely held perception that because of their geographical proximity, the Nordic countries have many foreign and security policy interest in common' (Stoltenberg 2009b, 5). Some common security interest is pretty much a precondition for Nordic defence cooperation; if national interests diverge too much, it would be hard to establish and maintain cooperation across such a wide range of issues. It is, however, no secret that there are also many differences separating the security outlooks of the Nordic states. Are the Nordic states sufficiently unified in their security outlooks for their common interests to facilitate the close military cooperation envisaged, or will the differences undermine the attempt to organise military cooperation?

When viewed historically, the idea that geopolitics can 'naturally' serve to pull the Nordic states in the same direction is at best questionable. Historically, geopolitics has often divided the Nordic region more than it has unified it on hard security issues. At 'moments of truth' for Nordic unity, Bernt Schiller argues, Nordic governments have always chosen the short-term option, putting national interest over Nordic unity. When push comes to shove, common interests on hard security issues have always been too weak (Schiller 1984, 226; see also Petersson 2010c, 241). A few historical examples illustrate this point.

The idea of Nordic unity was strong in the national Romanticism of the mid nineteenth century, but when put to the test in the Second Schleswig War of 1864, Sweden-Norway chose not to come to Denmark's aid against Prussia and Austria (Derry 1979, 238-248; Emstad 2008, 15-16, 66-69). After World War One

military cooperation among the Nordic states again became fashionable, closest of all between Sweden and Finland, but again the other Nordic states chose not to intervene when Finland was attacked by the Soviet Union in 1939 and Norway and Denmark by Germany in 1940 (Agrell 2000, 33–74; Holtsmark and Kristiansen 1991). In 1948–49 negotiations were undertaken to establish a Scandinavian defence union, but again efforts on behalf of Nordic unit on hard security collapsed in the face of insurmountable national differences (Skogrand 2004, 160–161; Kronvall and Petersson 2005, 35–40). The collapse of the Scandinavian defence union ensured a lasting security policy division within the Nordic region until the end of the Cold War, though some military-to-military cooperation did take place under the radar screen (Petersson 2003).

The above examples demonstrate Nordic unity's poor track record in the defence realm, but this need not necessarily invalidate Stoltenberg's finding: a belief among policymakers that the Nordic region now constitutes a single security space, pulled together by shared geography. However, if this were true, one would expect the security outlooks of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland to grow increasingly alike. Faced with shared problems in a shared geographical space, the Nordic security priorities for their own region should look much the same. However, this assumption does not bear closer scrutiny, particularly if one considers 'hard' security questions. Describing the situation, Lieutenant General Markku Koli, Chief of Defence Command Finland, says, 'each country seems to be primarily facing a different point of the compass. Norway's defence interests lie in the North, Finland's in the East, those of Sweden in the West and those of Denmark in the South' (Mattila and Härkönen 2009, 6). According to Clive Archer, a consequence of these differences has been 'a less than enthusiastic' response 'from the Nordic capitals' to the Stoltenberg report (Archer 2010a, 14). While ongoing cooperation is likely to take things 'to a newer level of activity' (Archer 2010b, 70), Archer does not see much hope in the current process reaching its outlined goals for the next ten to fifteen years; for that the strategic positions of the Nordic states are simply too different (Archer 2010b, 69–70).

Finland provides perhaps the best example of this. A decade ago, Mika Kerttunen wrote, 'Finnish defense policy is marked by continuity, a fundamental difference from a number of countries in both the east and west' (Kerttunen 2002, 205). This is as true today as it was then. In his recent study of post-Cold War Finnish defence policy, Jyri Raitasalo rates the shared border with Russia as a key factor in maintaining continuity in Finnish defence policy, and thus setting Finland apart from the other Nordic states (Raitasalo 2010). As he puts it, 'the potential military threat that [Russia] represents [...] has guided the reform of the Finnish defence system on a fairly moderate path' (Raitasalo 2010, 152). This was re-emphasized



following the Russian–Georgian War in 2008, by Finnish Minister of Defence, Jyri Häkämies: ‘the three main security challenges for Finland today are Russia, Russia and Russia’ (Forss 2010, 1). As long as resources suffice to maintain a balanced territorial defence system, an autonomous territorial defence will not be compromised in Finland (Martelius, Salo, and Sallinen 2007, 199). While having declined in relative importance after the Cold War, the territorial defence concept is still very much alive in Finnish defence policy circles (Raitasalo 2010, 96–103).

This emphasis on being able to defend itself may seem strange, given one of the key reasons why Finland joined the EU, i.e. the widespread view that membership would enhance Finnish security (Meinander 2006, 224–230; Browning 2008, 240–245). Indeed, to the Finnish government, the prospect of receiving assistance from the other EU Member States raises the threshold of armed aggression and improves Finland’s capability to deter any possible attack’ (Finnish Prime Minister’s Office 2009a, 73). However, while Denmark, Norway, and Iceland trust NATO’s Article 5, and Sweden trusts its friends in the EU and Nordic countries, to Finland such assurances are insufficiently reliable (Cronberg 2006, 320–322). The lesson of Finnish history is that Finland can only trust itself in a crisis, and that alignment with foreign powers only serves to pull the country into unnecessary conflicts (Mouritzen 2006, 504–505; on the ‘geopolitics of the past’, see Mouritzen 2009).

Different geopolitical outlooks were also instrumental in the development of different approaches to security and defence policy in two of the Nordic NATO countries, Norway and Denmark, after the Cold War (Saxi 2010b, 61–74, 2010a, 2011). The disappearance of a territorial threat, 1989–91, allowed Denmark to focus more on distant security challenges by the early 1990s, undertaking a major defence reform to this effect in 1993–94 (Danish Ministry of Defence 1992). Danish efforts concentrated on combating ‘indirect threats’ to peace and stability in Europe as well as globally (Rasmussen 2005, 77). Close alignment with the United States was also important to maintain Danish influence in a unipolar world (Heurlin 2004, 2007b, 2007a). Another major reform in 2004 scrapped the remaining territorial forces in Denmark, and focused the Armed Forces on expeditionary warfare on the one hand, while aiding civilian society to combat disasters and terrorism on the other (Danish Ministry of Defence 2004).

By 2010, writes Clive Archer, Denmark had ‘taken its gaze away from the larger Nordic region’ due to ‘the decision to reflect its position as a world trading nation by becoming active in global security issues not just diplomatically but with its armed forces’ (Archer 2010b, 69–70). According to the magazine *Foreign Policy*, Denmark was the sixth most ‘globalised’ country in the world, ahead of all the other Nordics (Rasmussen 2009, 14). When Denmark assumed the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2010, its focus was therefore not on local issues, but, ac-

cording to the Danish Permanent Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to 'consolidate and develop the Nordic response to globalisation' (Grube 2010, 28). Nordic cooperation on embassies abroad was the Nordic foreign policy proposal of most immediate interest to the Danish government (Grube 2010, 28).

While Denmark went enthusiastically 'out of area', Norway maintained a territorial defence posture until the early 2000s, adapting a more flexible and international deployable force structure only through two major reforms in 1999 and 2002 (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 1999; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2001). The need to preserve NATO, increase Norwegian influence in the Alliance, and ensuring Alliance aid would be forthcoming when needed at home were some of the reasons for this shift (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2001, 19–20, 22–24; Norwegian Defence Policy Commission 2000, 35–37). Norwegian efforts were henceforth concentrated on dealing with a dual security challenge. On the one hand, combating distant and diffuse threats in an age of globalisation, on the other maintaining sufficient national capacity for *national* military crisis management in the Norwegian High North (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2004, 12–13).

This latter dimension grew in importance as Russia reasserted itself on the world stage in the late 2000s, and as the economic and strategic importance of the Arctic region was seen to be on the rise (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2008, 12). The envisaged 'non-Article 5' scenarios for the High North were limited to the maritime sphere, and were thought to involve mainly air and sea forces (Diesen 2008a; Tamnes 2004, 245–246). The Norwegian government came to acknowledge an increased permanent military presence in the Norwegian High North as desirable to create 'stability'. It could be achieved by making the Norwegian presence an aspect of the normal order of things. 'Escalations', i.e., having to increase this presence in time of need, could therefore be avoided. The armed forces had to be able to handle full-spectrum, high-intensity military operation on their own, until the crisis either dissipated or escalated into a definite NATO Article-5 situation (Ulriksen 2007a, 151–160; Rottem, Hønneland, and Jensen 2008, 32–47).

Like Norway, Sweden maintained a reduced territorial defence organisation until the turn of the millennium. Sweden at first shared Norway and Finland's continuing concern with scenarios involving Russia, especially in the Baltic Sea region, but projections were gradually downscaled from full-scale war to limited military confrontations involving naval and air force units, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles (Swedish Defence Commission 1999, 51–58). A major defence reform was therefore undertaken in 1999 (Swedish Ministry of Defence 1999). In the late 1990s and early 2000s the threat of interstate-warfare and armed attack was considered to be on the wane, while other complex threats and challenges were waxing. Globalisation meant that Swedish security could no longer be viewed in isolation from

the rest of the world (Swedish Ministry of Defence 1999, 22, 31; Swedish Ministry of Defence 2004, 13–14). Sweden's immediate security is said to be virtually guaranteed if Finland and the Baltic states are safe, so the enhanced security situation enjoyed by these buffer-states to the east has given Sweden an opportunity to focus its energies on solving problems beyond Swedish territory and its immediate vicinity (Berner 2001, 131–133; Agrell 2000, 271–275). Sweden, more so than Norway and Finland but to a lesser extent than Denmark, has therefore experienced a de-territorialisation of defence after the Cold War (Ljung and Neretnieks 2009, 44–45; Christiansson 2009, 4–9).

After 1999–2000, Jan Joel Andersson argues, Swedish security policy was therefore 'marked by globalisation' with international missions now taking 'precedence above regional concerns and national territorial defence' (Andersson 2007, 136). The 2008 Georgian–Russian War led to some questioning of the basic assumptions of Swedish defence policy, and a delay in the upcoming defence bill in Sweden, but no radical re-orientation (Ringborg 2008; Holmström 2009). The culmination of the journey towards de-territorialisation was therefore the 2009 Defence Bill, which did away with almost all forces not rapidly available and deployable outside Swedish territory (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a).<sup>21</sup>

Finally, like Sweden and Denmark, Iceland sees no direct military threats in the short or medium term, and the Arctic is thought to remain a low-tension area in the near future (Interdisciplinary Commission 2009, 4–5). Despite the resumption of Russian strategic bomber flights near Icelandic airspace in 2007, Iceland remains more concerned with economic and societal security than traditional 'hard security' (Ingimundarson 2009, 78). Monitoring shipping around Iceland, improving security at sea and rescue cooperation, as well as improving capacity for dealing with natural disasters, are among Iceland's wider security priorities (Gudjonsson 2010 [interview]; Bjarnason 2010 [interview]). Nevertheless, while continuing to have no armed forces of its own, Iceland has become more active in the international security scene after the Cold War. Participating in NATO, UN and EU operations strengthens Iceland's ties with these organisations, and serves to compensate for the lack of a territorial defence (Interdisciplinary Commission 2009, 4). In the 2000s, Iceland joined NATO's Military Committee, contributed personnel to peacekeeping missions, and supported the enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance (Ingimundarson 2001, 299–302).

The termination in 2006 of American military presence on Iceland led the country to seek closer security cooperation with Norway and Denmark, although mainly of a symbolic and 'soft security' nature (Ingimundarson 2008, 80–84). The loss of the US base left Icelandic air space unguarded, and the country without a useful rescue helicopter capacity (Jóhannesson 2004, 129). After the US withdrew,

Iceland took over operation of the radar stations on the island, and established the Icelandic Defence Agency with about fifty employees. Iceland also received a scaled-down version of NATO *Air-Policing*, with aircraft stationed on the island for parts of the year. The Icelandic government welcomed the Stoltenberg Report's suggestion that the Nordic states take on a greater share of the responsibility for this mission, and encouraged Swedish–Finnish participation (Granholt 2009, 46–48).

To what degree then are Nordic states unified in their security outlook and interests? The similarities are many and clear. Firstly, they all share similar concerns about distant and diffuse threats, including failed states, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cross-border crime, piracy, migration, and pandemics, to name a few. All consider the surveillance of their own territory and adjacent areas, and securing their sovereignty and sovereign rights to be key tasks. Finally, in the unlikely case of a large-scale war involving their territory, Denmark, Norway and Iceland will continue to rely on NATO and the US collective defence guarantee (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2008, 17; Danish Ministry of Defence 2009, 1; Interdisciplinary Commission 2009). While nonaligned, Sweden nevertheless also emphasises the possibility to receive assistance in wartime, and expects the EU and the Nordic countries 'not to remain passive' were Sweden to be the victim of armed aggression (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a, 29). Finland does not explicitly expect such assistance, but considers it important 'to guarantee the reception of military and other assistance needed in a crisis situation' (Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2009a, 109). So far, with the exception of Finland and a full-blown war, the security policies and priorities of the Nordic states are nearly identical. What then of the differences?

First, there are differences in the threat perceptions of the Nordic states when it comes to the *limited* use of force in their vicinity, limited in the sense of requiring more military capacity than an ability to 'show the flag' and uphold sovereignty, but less than a full-scale territorial defence ability. This use of force, likely as an element of a political strategy to put pressure on the Nordic government in question, would be of short duration and limited in scope, but brutal in its intensity (Diesen 2008a). Iceland and Denmark have very little focus on this scenario, having dedicated no extra military resources to its eventuality. Both states have dedicated sea and air vessels designed for patrolling their territorial waters, but their capacity for combat is extremely limited.<sup>22</sup>

Sweden has earmarked a few reserve forces, and done some forward stationing of tanks on the island of Gotland, with warfare scenarios involving Swedish territory in mind (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a, 64, 71–72). Overall, however, Sweden has a 'here and now' perspective on military matters (Tolgfors 2008, 25), with the main emphasis on working alongside others in international military op-

erations abroad (Christiansson 2010, 99). Norway also aims to provide forces for operations abroad, but simultaneously dedicates a good deal of its military resource to maintaining a military presence and crisis management capacity in its High North (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2008, 18–19). Finally, with a few exceptions, all Finnish defence resources are intended for solving national tasks, such as countering a strategic strike up to and including full-scale war (Finnish Defence Forces 2008, 40–41).

Second, there are profound differences when it comes to which part of the Nordic area the Nordic states have shown any interest in. Finland and Sweden are mainly concerned about the Baltic Sea area.<sup>23</sup> The environmental risk to the Baltic Sea is of great concern to Sweden, and 90 per cent of Swedish trade is seaborne (Swedish Defence Commission 2007, 42; Tolgfors 2010a, 5; Holmgren 2010, 26).<sup>24</sup> Likewise, protection of Finland's sea lines of communications through the Baltic Sea, upon which 83 per cent of Finland imports and exports rely, is the main task of the Finnish Navy (Kaskeala 2009a, 12). Norway and Iceland are preoccupied with their 'High North' and the Arctic, where both states have huge fishery and potential hydrocarbon resources, and where international shipping is expected to increase in the future (Rottem, Hønneland, and Jensen 2008, 32–47; Bjarnason 2008; Ingimundarson 2009). Denmark is interested both in the Baltic Sea and its Arctic areas (Greenland), but is equally, if not more, focused on the euro-regional and global level (Petersen 2009a).

What do these differences in security policy mean for Nordic military cooperation? First, they mean that Denmark is unlikely to join Nordic cooperation on the basis of shared security policy interests; geographical proximity has not given Denmark a world view similar to those of the other Nordic states (Archer 2010b, 63–70; Saxi 2010b, 61–74). Altogether, Denmark has probably moved the farthest away from a traditional 'Nordic' view of security and defence (Browning 2007, 38–39). As one well-known Danish security expert expressed the Danish view, 'Cooperation? Why not! Just join us Danes in the Helmand province!' (Christiansson 2009, 11). The former Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ellemann-Jensen argues that if Nordic defence cooperation is 'to be meaningful, Finland and Sweden will have to join NATO, and Iceland and Norway will have to join the EU' (Fugl 2009, 19).

Sweden is also more concerned with regional and global challenges to its security than any in its immediate area. As one Swedish historian puts it, 'If Sweden is facing a threat after the Cold War it is not one of invasion but of marginalisation' (Malmberg 2001, 312). However, Baltic Sea issues do concern Sweden. The Russian-Georgian War of 2008 increased its focus on 'military conflicts of interests and incidents in our immediate area' (Tolgfors 2009). The German-Russian pipeline in the Baltic Sea also triggered some concerns about 'local' security issues. Comment-

ing on the proposed pipeline, a former Swedish foreign minister warned that it had 'only been studied from an environmental perspective, but there are also security aspects to consider. For example, the need to monitor [the pipeline] may lead to a heavier naval presence in our neighbourhood' (Abrahamson 2009, 60). Thus, Swedish enthusiasm for costly initiatives dealing with Nordic issues in the North Atlantic and Barents Sea is unlikely to be high, but the country would be willing, indeed, eager, to engage its Nordic partners in 'soft' and perhaps even hard security cooperation in the Baltic Sea area. If part of a wider quid pro quo the country could also be expected to engage with Nordic security cooperation beyond the Baltic Sea.

Finland and Norway share a continuing concern about their immediate area, and prepare for handling military incidents and crises nationally. Thus one would expect perhaps a near commonality of views among defence officials in Oslo and Helsinki. However, this is not the case. In the latter country some officials believe that Norway and Finland share a special bond given their mutual concerns with territorial security and Russia (Sallinen 2010 [interview]), but this is not believed to be the case among officials in the former.<sup>25</sup> Norway remains fixated on its maritime areas and the High North, where the government aims to increase its military presence and readiness (Norwegian Ministry of Finance 2008, 26–28). The debate in Norway is whether conscription is at all effective in achieving these goals, not least in an era said to require capital and knowledge-intensive military forces (Norwegian Chief of Defence 2009; Diesen 2010, 4–9). But Norway is also keen to persuade friends, particularly NATO allies, to cultivate and retain an interest in the security of the region (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 91–99). The country was meanwhile sceptical about issuing extra-NATO guarantees to Sweden and Finland; in the view of Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, a solidarity declaration was 'unworkable given Article 5' and Norway would 'never be in favour of having some other sort of declaration that would contribute towards replacing it' (Hansen 2009, 51). The most concrete promise the State Secretary for Defence would offer Sweden, would be 'to make sure the issue was raised within NATO' were the country to come under armed attack (Fyhn 2007).

While Finland is eager to work with others in a Nordic setting, its continuing doctrine of self-reliance ('trust only yourself') is likely to complicate security cooperation on hard security issues. This is exemplified by an informal discussion between Norwegian and Finnish officials on joint maintenance, for example of helicopters, during which senior Finnish officials suggested that if Finland were to send some of its helicopters to Norway it should receive, for example, Norwegian Leopard 2 main battle tanks in return. The tanks would serve as collateral, providing Finland with something more than paper guaranties that the country would get its helicopters back were a crisis to occur while they were in Norway (Enger 2010 [conversation]).

Meanwhile, Finland has little to spare for its Nordic neighbours in a crisis. A department director at the Finnish National Defence University characterised the Finnish view of a Norwegian conflict with Russia: 'Certainly we would like to help, but considering our geographical position, this would most probably lead to undue pressure against us – a situation where all scarce resource would be needed at home' (Archer 2010b, 61).

Finally, Iceland would have few objections about cooperating on Nordic 'soft security' measures such as surveillance of the North Atlantic, nor hard security issues such as air policing over Iceland. However, in light of their limited means, the country has little to offer in return. Thus, Iceland will remain an important partner for Denmark and Norway, who have interests in the North Atlantic, but cooperation with Sweden and Finland on Baltic Sea issues will be minimal.

Overall then, the Nordic region is not a unified body on hard-security issues. It was demonstrated most visibly by the case of Iceland and the Nordic solidarity declaration. The Nordic governments have been cautious about the idea of jointly assuming more responsibility for Iceland's security, such as for air policing over the island (Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Nordic Countries 2009, 2). By their actions they have emphasised that the island's defence remains the responsibility of NATO and the United States. The slow progress on the proposed 'Nordic declaration of solidarity' also indicates a certain unwillingness to create some kind of sub-regional security system. As the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs argued, 'it is important not to do anything which undermines or creates doubts about the central role of NATO' (Fyhn 2009). The scope of any such declaration is likely to be limited to 'new security challenges and non-military threats', and leave out military guarantees (Faremo 2011; 6).

Far from sharing the same outlook, the view from Copenhagen is profoundly different from that in Helsinki. Oslo and Stockholm represent something of a *via media*, but each is also focused on its own maritime area, with the former more concerned about Russia than the latter. The Nordic region thus appears very much divided when it comes to priorities and perspectives on security, a poor basis for close cooperation on hard security by the Nordic states if based on an assumption of similar security outlooks.





# NORDEFECO in practice: Benefits and costs

As with security organisation membership there is widespread disagreement about whether NORDEFECO really serves to enhance the security situation of the Nordic states. Proponents argue that cooperation strengthens ties among the Nordic states, in itself a security gain, while enabling them to produce more military power and solve more challenging problems. Sceptics argue that Nordic cooperation makes them increasingly reliant upon states that are not formal allies, creating dependencies with their own inherent risks, and drawing resources away from working with larger and more important partners. So do the benefits from cooperation outweigh the potential losses? This chapter asks how NORDEFECO can help improve the security situation of the Nordic states by giving them more military resources than they would otherwise have available, but also undermine their military autonomy, with consequences for participation in international operations abroad and national defence at home.

Norwegian and Swedish studies on Nordic defence cooperation see enhanced military capabilities for all the Nordic countries as one of the most important identifiable effects of successful cooperation. By enabling the Nordic states to maintain a larger and more balanced set of military capabilities, cooperation could provide security policy benefits (Johansen and Åtland 2007, 23; Ljung 2007, 78–79). Many of the initial initiatives have cost relatively little, while providing great benefits: *much gain with little pain*.

One of these ongoing 'quick-win' initiatives involves the coordination and organisation of joint Swedish and Norwegian logistical flights to Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan, starting April 2010, an initiative which provides savings and greater efficiency at negligible investment cost (Hård af Segerstad 2010, 6). Another is the

joint air forces training exercises involving the Norwegian fighter wing at Bodø, the Swedish fighter wing at Luleå, and the Finnish fighter wing in Rovaniemi, providing all three air forces with advanced training opportunities at virtually no extra cost (NORDSUP 2008b, B: 2-B: 4). The joint air exercises have also received much media attention, giving it the added benefit of being a public relations 'success story' for the air forces and Nordic cooperation in general (Holm 2009; Kask 2010; Bonafede 2010).

On the ground, the major Norwegian exercise Cold Response, to which all NATO and PfP countries were invited, was conducted in part on Swedish territory in 2010 (Rapp 2010). Swedish and Finnish forces participated, Sweden providing the second largest contingent in troop numbers after Norway, with over 1,000 soldiers from the Army, Air Force and Home Guard (Egeberg 2010; Englund and Carlsson 2010, 10). The benefits to the Norwegian and Swedish forces were larger and better exercises, at little extra cost. Sweden wants to foster closer cooperation at the brigade and battalion level with Norway and Finland, and would also like to turn Cold Response into a co-hosted Norwegian-Swedish exercise for NATO and PfP countries (Mörtberg 2010 [interview]).

The constraint of critical mass is also being overcome within some military subfields by conducting joint training and education on a unit-to-unit level, enabling the retention of small, specialised capabilities that would otherwise not be available. By training explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) personnel from Norway, Sweden and Denmark together, training of each country's small EOD capacities can continue even while much of their EOD personnel is deployed to Afghanistan (Hård af Segerstad 2010 [interview]). The Norwegian army in northern Norway and their Swedish counterparts in northern Sweden also cooperated closely on training very marginal categories of specialised personnel, such as divers, where both sides were experiencing the 'crunch' of critical mass (Mörtberg 2010 [interview]).

Cooperation also adds operationally deployable capabilities which would not otherwise be available. The joint Norwegian-Swedish helicopter arrangement, under which Swedish technicians are to deploy to Afghanistan to help maintain Norwegian Bell 412 helicopters, allows the Norwegian helicopters to remain in theatre with less strain on Norwegian personnel, and to extend their reach to the Swedish Provincial Reconstruction Team's area of operation (Hahr 2010, 6; Hård af Segerstad 2010, 6). This would give the Swedish contingent in Afghanistan something close to organic helicopter support, a capacity sought since 2008 (Lundgren 2009, 6). In early 2010 Norway, Sweden and Finland also decided to run common training courses for their Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams, through which the three countries have taken joint responsibility for an Afghan National Army Brigade (Norwegian Armed Forces 2010, 33).

Initiatives which may soon get started include the exchange of recognized air pictures between, on the one hand, NATO, and, on the other, Sweden and Finland, which would improve situation awareness for all Nordic countries at little cost (NORDSUP 2008b, B: 2). Arrangements for Swedish and Finnish participation are currently being finalised, and Norway and the Baltic states are offering to act as coordinators and sponsors for respectively Swedish and Finnish participation in the NATO Air Situation Data Exchange programme (NORDSUP 2008b, B: 2; O'Dwyer 2009c; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2010a). Meanwhile, projects that are similar in principle to the exchange of air situation pictures but potentially more costly are being undertaken in the maritime sphere.

Since 2006, Sweden and Finland have exchanged a common maritime picture of the Baltic Sea, through the Sea Surveillance Co-operation between Finland and Sweden, or SUCFIS. In 2008, an enlarged cooperation called Sea Surveillance Co-operation in the Baltic Sea (SUCBAS) was envisaged, to cover the entire Baltic Sea and all the states bordering it (Kaskeala 2009a, 12–13). While EDA and the European Commission aim to coordinate and develop common policies among member states on Baltic Sea surveillance, Sweden and Finland have intended all along to include non-EU members in SUCBAS (EDD 2009; NORDSUP 2008b, c:1–c:2). By 2010, Denmark, as well as Germany, Estonia and Lithuania, had joined this undertaking.

Developing almost simultaneously as the Baltic Sea initiative, the Norwegian government in June 2010 decided to go ahead with plans for BarentsWatch (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010), described as a 'comprehensive monitoring, prediction and information system for the [North Atlantic] High North ocean areas' (SINTEF 2009, 5). The Stoltenberg Report proposed having SUCBAS and BarentsWatch make up the two pillars of a Nordic maritime monitoring system (Stoltenberg 2009b, 12–14). By the inclusion of Norway in SUCBAS and the inclusion of Sweden, Finland and Denmark in BarentsWatch, each of the involved Nordic countries would be given greater (unclassified) maritime situation awareness.

The main crunch for these future initiatives will perhaps be the degree to which there is sufficient interest to pay the cost of admittance to common Nordic solutions, especially when such initiatives deal with areas not vital to all the Nordic countries. In the case of the Stoltenberg Report recommendations, Norway is holding off on joining SUCBAS until it is clear whether the information it provides is useful for Norway, and justifies the cost of joining (Røksund 2010 [interview]). As for Nordic air policing over Iceland, Swedish officials were positive in principle. However, implementing plans for Nordic air policing is not an imminent proposition. It was a proposal, Sweden stresses, which requires further analysis, not least concerning the cost of the proposal (Ekengren 2010 [interview], Ericsson 2010 [interview]). From

a Swedish point of view, the emphasis on the High North and the Arctic also needed to be balanced against a greater focus on the Baltic Sea area (Ekengren 2010 [interview]). Finnish officials also expressed limited enthusiasm for participating in air policing over Iceland.<sup>26</sup> These examples demonstrate the reluctance of the Nordic states when it comes to participating in non-vital projects with a price tag attached.

An example of a long-term initiative, envisaged realised by 2019, is a standardised Nordic mechanized battalion, Mechbat 2020. Creating commonality between the mechanized land forces of the Nordic states will increase cost efficiency and give operational benefits (NORDSUP 2008b, A: 6-A: 7). Such an endeavour would, if realised, be a real 'flagship' for NORDEFCO (Kaskeala 2009b, 8). With mostly identical components, the Swedish Chief of Defence General Sverker Göranson believes that the Nordic states could one day be able to operate a rotational system in international operations – equipment, vehicles and weapons would remain in theatre, while personnel from one Nordic country could rotate in to relieve another state's personnel (Haglund 2009, 11). Another possible major long-term project concerns the joint acquisition of a common Swedish-Norwegian submarine, likely reducing acquisition costs by as much as a third and enabling greater teeth-to-tail ratio in both countries (NORDSUP 2008b, C: 8-C: 12).

If increased operational capability is the chief advantage of cooperation, what then are the main drawbacks? One answer is offered by Colonel Bjørn Innset, for whom the tolerance level of dependency on other countries is the main limiting factor for Nordic defence cooperation. By implication, dependency is thus the chief drawback to cooperation (Innset 2010, 4). Creating military dependency will have security policy repercussions, since the Nordic states are not formal allies, and even within formal alliances, making oneself dependent on others can be particularly risky. For example, during the 1990–1991 Gulf War, Belgium turned down a British request to supply ammunition to British forces in the Gulf. It caused certain practical difficulties for the UK and much resentment towards Belgium in Britain (Wallace 2005, 436). So cutting costs by outsourcing some tasks, such as munitions production, to other states is never devoid of risk, even within alliances. But just how serious is the dependency-creating nature of Nordic defence cooperation?

A Swedish study looking at the possible consequences of Nordic cooperation concluded that joint procurement, upgrading and maintenance of military materiel and training of personnel would be 'from a security policy point of view, pretty unproblematic' (Ljung 2007, 78). A Norwegian study is a little more cautious, noting that 'parts of the cooperation are moving towards a degree of integration where in practice it may become difficult to employ our forces freely according to purely national priorities' (Johansen and Åtland 2007, 24). This seems to be the main drawback in 'peacetime', *a slight decline in national freedom of action*. The exact extent was

not discussed at length in the NORDSUP study process, since most of its working groups 'did not consider political constraints or consequences in detail' (NORDSUP 2008b, A: 4).

An important caveat must be noted on the discussion on dependency, namely that if the dual challenge of spiralling costs and critical mass means having to abandon some capabilities completely, sharing them with others will usually seem the less daunting option to the country involved. In such a 'share it or lose it' scenario, the gains of cooperation will be paramount (O'Donnell 2009). The former Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish Chiefs of Defence believe their countries are standing at such a crossroad, necessitating close cooperation (Diesen and Syrén 2007; Diesen, Kaskeala, and Syrén 2008). If one accepts this view, then the argument that dependency on other states is detrimental to the maintenance of an autonomous national defence capacity is rendered obsolete, because such a national defence capacity would be impossible to maintain without cooperation. Thus *the possibility of abandonment creating a risk to the national defence capacity* is neutralised by the Chiefs' argument, since small states have no choice but to opt for some level of dependency *or* the abandonment of balanced modern Armed Forces. Nevertheless, for those who do not accept this argument, the question of dependency is a serious one, if not now then in the long term.

But cutting certain capabilities from the armed forces is also conceivable, concentrating instead on expanding and enhancing the quality of the remaining ones than would otherwise have been possible. This is the strategy Denmark has chosen since 2003, focusing on capabilities for high-intensity expeditionary warfare (Bruun 2003, 34–36; see also Rasmussen 2004). This would make it impossible to maintain 'balanced armed forces' in the traditional sense, but would provide 'niche capacities' for employment in, e.g. coalition warfare missions.

Among the concrete proposals inherited by Nordic defence cooperation, dependency would be most pronounced in the proposed joint medical and logistical support services. Medical services was the most ambitious short-term goal of trilateral Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish cooperation; Norway and Sweden envisaged a joint and co-located Role 2 medical unit. In logistics, a joint or combined movement control taskforce was also considered, along with a Nordic hub for, respectively, strategic air and sealift (NORDSUP 2008b, D: 1–D:6). Any joint unit, particularly ones as crucial for deployments in international operations as medical and logistical enabling forces, would necessarily involve the risk of having these assets denied when effective control is shared with other states. At best, this would be inconvenient and increase costs; at worst it would mean the deployment could not take place.

National options are also constrained by participation in cooperation in another way; the dependency of others will necessarily result in pressure to make necessary

assets available when other states wish to employ their armed forces. This is due to the 'shadow of the future' effect (see Axelrod and Keohane 1985, 232–234). The Nordic Battle Group (NBG) provides a good example of this in action. While every member retains national control over its forces, a decision to withhold forces, complicating and even sabotaging deployment altogether, would fundamentally undermine the country's credibility as a partner. If one is seen as a likely hamstring to the battlegroup's deployment, one will not be invited to participate again (Granhölm 2006, 64). This pressure to deploy is particularly problematic for Norway, the only non-EU member of the NBG. Participation is Norway's main strategy for gaining influence (Græger 2002), but since Norway cannot take part in intra-EU political deliberations on when and where to deploy, the country will face a 'take it or leave it' choice when the EU decides to deploy the NBG. Since the cost of refusal would be substantial, Norway would in practice have little choice but to agree. Norwegian influence will most likely be strong when it comes to technical and practical cooperation with Sweden and Finland, but much weaker in the political deliberations of the union prior to deployment (Udgaard 2006, 326).

Dependency would not be restricted to *international* operations, but could also be extended to include the capacity to carry out certain kinds of *national* military operation. The Norwegian and Swedish armed forces were discussing in early 2010 whether it would be possible to have a single ammunition depot for the Archer artillery system. It would save money, but also increase Norwegian reliance on Sweden in a crisis, since Sweden would have the stocks of ammunition. Norway would therefore need assurances that the ammunition would be made available when needed (Anonymous 5 [interview], Klæboe 2010 [conversation]). Initially, Swedish officials told their Norwegian counterparts that delivery of ammunition from Sweden to Norway in a crisis would require an act of the Swedish parliament, which they were nonetheless confident would be forthcoming. The Norwegian officials were not satisfied, and wanted assurances that the ammunition would automatically be transferred to Norway on request (Anonymous 3 [conversation]).

The issue is presently the subject of negotiations, but demonstrates the sensitivity of cost-saving measures that create important dependencies. In Finland as well, defence officials stress the need for a guarantee that if the Nordic countries are to pursue common procurement, storage and maintenance of ammunition and military equipment, the arrangements will work at a time of crisis. To minimise dependency on others, Finland aims to retain a fairly broad capability to maintain equipment and supply its forces nationally (Tuominen 2010 [interview]).

Similar to the ammunition issue, should two or more Nordic states choose to maintain their heavy vehicles at locations in one country, the dependence of the country without a heavy vehicle maintenance capacity would obviously increase.

At the moment, the Swedish Armed Forces Logistics is maintaining components of Danish, Norwegian and Finnish main battle tanks (Swedish Armed Forces Logistics 2010), a trend which is likely to include more components and perhaps whole vehicles in the future (Diesen 2010 [conversation]). Sweden has a lot of surplus maintenance capacity, and it could easily be adapted for maintaining heavy vehicles used by the Norwegian and Finnish Army (Mörtberg 2010 [interview], Diesen 2010 [conversation]). It would allow both Norway and Finland to downscale their heavy vehicle maintenance facilities, and send their main battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles to Sweden for repairs and maintenance. However, again, this would create a dependence on Sweden. Would vehicles being maintained or upgraded in Sweden be returned on request in a crisis? And would vehicle overhaul be possible if the international climate deteriorated, such as during a long-lasting international crisis?

In the end, few Nordic officials see these dependencies as seriously damaging, emphasising instead the positive security policy benefits of being able to maintain a wider set of military capabilities.<sup>27</sup> However, cooperation, they all stress, is fundamentally based on trust; countries must have confidence that in a time of crisis capabilities and resources which are no longer purely national will be available for use.<sup>28</sup> At the moment there is such confidence, but it is inevitably fragile. As the former Icelandic Minister for Foreign Affairs Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir sees the Nordic countries, 'It's a bit like your family - you don't always agree with them, but they're there if anything happens' (Ágústsson 2009, 41). Continuing to build on this kind of mutual trust and understanding is essential to the continued wellbeing of ongoing and future Nordic defence cooperation.





# The Nordic armed forces: ideal or incompatible partners?

As demonstrated in chapter 3, the Nordic states see things differently on matters of regional security. However, this does not mean that their armed forces are necessarily incompatible partners. According to the Norwegian Armed Forces, successful international military cooperation requires 'that the cooperating countries [armed forces] should mainly be directed towards the same types of tasks, ambitions, equipment and defence concepts' (Norwegian Chief of Defence 2007, 63). In short, they have to be a good 'fit' for one another. To what extent then do the armed forces of the Nordic states 'fit' together? Are they a good match, or are the differences so great as to prove a real obstacle to cooperation?

As we shall see, in some ways the Nordic armed forces are more similar today than during the Cold War, but in others they are also more dissimilar than they used to be. Some of these differences and similarities clearly stem from their respective security outlooks and the geopolitical situation, but others are idiosyncrasies that are less predictable, less based on such factors, yet significant because they affect their ability to work together. So how well do the Nordic Armed Forces go together?

Perhaps the best evidence of the Nordic armed forces being a good 'match' is the fact that it was the militaries themselves that pushed NORDEFECO into being in the first place. The initial push in late 2006 for a more extensive form of military cooperation among the Nordic countries came from the top of the military hierarchy in Norway and Sweden, i.e. the Chiefs of Defence General Sverre Diesen and General Håkan Syrén. They were joined later by their Finnish colleague, Admiral Pauli Juhani Kaskeala. A change of leadership in 2009 did not affect attitudes to NOR-

DEFCO; Sweden's General Sverker Göranson, Norway's General Harald Sunde, and Finland's General Ari Puheloinen all share their predecessors' commitment to the organisation.<sup>29</sup>

The Swedish and Norwegian Chiefs wrote in 2007 about how they saw a 'great potential for cooperation' between their two countries, including acquisition, upgrading and training on materiel, as well as deploying and utilizing it in international operations (Diesen and Syrén 2007). The Swedish Defence Materiel Administration saw 'geographical proximity' and 'the fact that the Nordic countries often participate in joint efforts' giving Nordic cooperation 'an extra large potential for savings' compared to other international partnerships (FMV 2010, 7). Indeed, conditions were much better for this type of cooperation now than during the Cold War, and not just because Sweden's and Finland's security policies were different.

With respect to the main weapon systems they employ, the Nordic armed forces are much more similar today than during the Cold War. In 1980 Norway and Denmark employed chiefly American and West-German main battle tanks, armoured personnel carriers, artillery, aircraft, helicopters, and submarines. Sweden relied mostly on indigenous weapon systems, and Finland employed a mix of mostly Soviet, indigenous and some Swedish gear (IISS 1980, 31–32, 40–41, 48–49, 46). Two decades latter this situation has changed dramatically, as illustrated by table 2.

Four of the Nordic countries now operate the same type of main battle tank and infantry fighting vehicle, and three of them operate similar armour personnel carriers and transport aircraft. The decision by Norway, Sweden and Finland to acquire the same helicopter means that during the 2010s they will all come to operate the NH90, albeit in different roles. It will create wider equipment commonality. Such commonality, a Finnish report concluded, will create benefits in a 'life cycle perspective' and 'its interoperability makes it highly suitable for international operations' (Suila 2008, 14).

Other significant upcoming projects furthering commonality are the joint Norwegian–Swedish acquisition of the Swedish self-propelled artillery system Archer, the Finish acquisition of the Norwegian surface-to-air missile system NASAM, and the Swedish decision to acquire the Finnish armoured personnel carrier Patria AMV (FMV 2009; IISS 2010, 2008; Dwyer 2009a).<sup>30</sup> However, the biggest potential project would have been the Nordic acquisition of a common fighter aircraft. Both Norway and Denmark are poised to replace their F-16 fighter aircraft, and the Swedish JAS Gripen, also operated by the Swedish Air Force, was one of the potential candidates. The Norwegian decision to go for the F-35 in November 2008 effectively scuttled the prospect of a 'pan-Nordic' fighter aircraft (O'Dwyer 2008; Office of the Norwegian Prime Minister 2008). In April 2009, Denmark postponed the decision,

	Denmark	Norway	Sweden	Finland
Main Battle Tank	Leopard 2A5	Leopard 2A4	Leopard 2A5	Leopard 2A4
Infantry Fighting Vehicle	CV9035DK	CV9030N	CV9040	CV9030FIN
Armoured Personnel Carrier	M113	M113/Sisu	Pbv 302/Sisu	Sisu
Artillery	M-109	M-109/Archer	FH77B/Archer	S21 / D-30
Fighter Aircraft	F16AM	F16AM	JAS 39C/D	F/A18C
Transport Aircraft	C-130J	C-130J	C-130E	C-295M
Tactical Transport Helicopter	EH-101 Merlin	Bell 412SP	NH90TTH/A-109M/AS332	NH90TTH/ Mi-8
Primary surface combatant	Iver Huitfeldt class	Fridtjof Nansen class	Visby class	Hamina class
Submarine	---	Ula class	Gotland class	---
Maritime Helicopter	Super Lynx MK90B	Lynx Mk86 / NH90NFH	A-109M	---

TABLE 2: Nordic Armed Forces Equipment Communality 2010

though the F-35 is considered by observers to be a favourite of the Danish as well (Norwegian News Agency 2009).

Off course, the Nordic states operate slightly different versions of the weapon systems they have in common, tuned to their national requirements. This causes problems for joint maintenance, upgrading and system training. For this reason, some are urging to eliminate these national differences. For instance, the Norwegian Chief of Defence argued that Norway should purchase the Swedish version of the Leopard 2 (Dalløkken 2009). In the long run, however, such national idiosyncrasies on equipment acquisition will only be overcome if the Nordic armed forces manage to come up with common requirements and standards, and succeed in acquiring and upgrading systems accordingly.<sup>31</sup> This will not necessarily be easy, or, in some cases, even desirable. In order to procure the same equipment, 'countries will have to compromise on their demands and expectations' (NORDSUP 2008b, 2). The Nordic armed forces will have to settle for 'good enough' rather than equipment 'tailor-made' to their specific requirements.<sup>32</sup>

However, equipment harmonisation is not the be-all and end-all of Nordic co-operation. Even where the equipment parks of the Nordic armed forces are identical, they would still have very different force structures and assigned tasks, significant challenges both. These differences are largely new, unheard of two decades ago. In 1980, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland all had huge inactive reserve forces numbering 10–20 times their active forces, to be manned by former conscripts in wartime. Conscripts also made up between 1/3 to 3/4 of their active personnel (IISS 1980, 31–32, 40–41, 48–49, 46). These huge forces, potentially numbering more than 10 per cent of the population of the Nordic countries, were mostly designed for relatively static territorial defence tasks, and were neither organisationally nor legally suitable for projection across large strategic distances before engaging in battle (Yost 2000–01, 99–100).

The picture today is radically different, particularly with regard to the Nordic land forces. Starting in 2010 Sweden will have an all-volunteer force (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a, 75–81; see also Petersson 2010b, 148–155). The Swedish government is emphatic that the Swedish Armed Forces must be capable of performing across the full range of military missions on Swedish territory, as well as regionally and globally, alone or jointly with others (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a, 33–38). The new force structure is described by the Swedish Armed Forces as 'expeditionary' and 'modular' in character, while its reduced size makes it less capable of defending Swedish territory from attack (Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters 2008, 20–23). Several standing, all-volunteer battalions will be set up under the Swedish Army. They will be supplemented by several all-volunteer battalions manned at reduced strength, but which can be rapidly brought up to full strength

by mobilising reservists. In total there will be eight manoeuvre battalions, capable of being subordinated at need to two brigade headquarters. The Air Force will have four fighter squadrons equipped with JAS-39 C/D fighter aircraft, while the main combat strength of the Navy will be seven corvettes, five *Visby* class and two *Göteborg* class, as well as four submarines of the *Gotland/Sondermanland* classes (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a, 45–72; Olsen 2010a, 15). In 2010, a universal obligation to serve on missions abroad was *de facto* introduced for all regular members of the Swedish Armed Forces (Holmström 2010).

The Danish Armed Forces place more emphasis on high-intensity coalition warfare far from Danish territory, seeking since 2003 to be capable of providing robust and combat-capable ‘initial entry force’ for NATO and/or US-led coalitions regionally and globally (Bruun 2003, 34–36). In order to produce these deployable forces Denmark has retained since 2004 an essentially all-volunteer force (Danish Ministry of Defence 2004). While thousands of Danish draftees annually still undergo a short four-month ‘total defence’ training programme, it works primarily as a way to recruit personnel for the all-volunteer units (Heurlin 2006, 166–171). The Danish Army is divided in principle into two mechanized brigades, one being a standing rapid reaction brigade, the other maintaining Denmark’s ongoing missions abroad. Air Force combat strength consists of two fighter squadrons with F-16 AM aircraft, while the Navy’s major surface vessels count three *Iver Huitfeldt* class frigates now being constructed, as well as two flexible support ships of the *Absalon* class. The latter are capable of transporting 200 extra soldiers, are equipped with a role-on-role of platform, and can provide naval fire support up to 100km inland (Nørby 2006, 46–49, 124–129, 169–171, 182–201). Since 1994, it has been possible to order all regular armed forces personnel to serve abroad when needed (Clemmesen 1995, 128).

Norway occupies an intermediate position between Denmark and Sweden on the one hand, and Finland on the other. While most of the Norwegian Armed Forces have been available in principle for international deployment since 2002, including Norway’s only remaining brigade since 2004, the retention of long-term conscription means that many units are only employable nationally (Norwegian Chief of Defence 2003, 10).<sup>33</sup> At home, the Norwegian Armed Forces aim to have sufficient national capacity to force any opponent to employ such force against Norway as to trigger NATO’s involvement, turning the conflict into a collective alliance defence mission (Norwegian Chief of Defence 2007, 5–6; Norwegian Defence Policy Commission 2007, 33–36; Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 18–19, 37–38; Diesen 2008a). To do this the Norwegian Armed Forces draft 10,000 conscripts a year for a twelve-month term of service, making two out of three of the Norwegian Army’s manoeuvre battalions dependent on conscripts who cannot be ordered to

serve abroad (Sætre 2010).<sup>34</sup> However, the Norwegian Army also has a number of all-volunteer units. One mechanized battlegroup makes up an all-volunteer Army High Readiness Force. The Air Force fields three fighter squadrons equipped with F-16 AM aircraft, while the Navy's major vessels are to be five *Fridtjof Nansen* class frigates, six *Ula* class submarines, and six *Skjold* class coastal corvettes (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2008, 70–90). Since 2004, it has been possible to order officers, NCOs and professional enlisted soldiers to serve abroad (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2004, 80–82).

Finland is the country whose armed forces are geared more strongly than the others' towards national tasks, setting it apart from the other Nordic states (see e.g. Sallinen 2007). Even if the threat of a military conflict is seen as low, Finland as the only Nordic country still identifies 'military capacities' in its region (i.e. Russia) whose deterrence can only be achieved by raising the conflict threshold to an unacceptable level for a potential adversary (Heurlin 2007c, 47–48). Finnish defence policy therefore continues to be 'based on a robust defence system implemented in accordance with territorial defence principles, general conscription and a strong will to defend the nation' (Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2009b, 107). What territorial defence means in practice is 'to engage the aggressor at the border and prevent him from reaching strategically vital areas' (Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2009b, 110). In order to do this the Finnish Defence Forces (FDF) train about 25,000 conscripts annually, with another 25,000 undergoing refreshment training (Finnish Defence Forces 2008, 6). The wartime strength of the FDF land forces is eleven brigades and two battlegroups. The bulk of these forces is inactive reserve units. The Air Force consists of 3 fighter squadrons equipped with F-18 C/D aircraft, and the Navy fields eight fast patrol crafts, four each of the *Hamina* and *Rauma* class. The total strength of the FDF upon mobilisation is 350,000 troops (Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2009a, 127). Finland is the only Nordic country where military personnel, even regular soldiers and officers, cannot by default be ordered to serve abroad (Vesa 2007, 529–534).

At a glance the Norwegian, Swedish and Danish armed forces share a structure which is more similar in size than that of Finland. Apart from this, the main differences between the Nordic states is that the Swedish Air Force is about twice as large as its Nordic counterparts, and Norway and Denmark maintain a larger blue-water capable navy than do Finland and Sweden. Norway and Finland also man many of their standing units with undeployable conscripts, unlike Denmark and Sweden.

What are the implications of these structural similarities and dissimilarities? First, in terms of structure and tasks, the Swedish and Danish Armed Forces look very similar. The difference is one of emphasis, with Denmark more concerned with expeditionary warfare missions, and Sweden more with stability operations and re-

<b>Armed Forces</b>	<b>Dan</b>	<b>Nor</b>	<b>Swe</b>	<b>Fin</b>
Brigades	2	1	2	11
Frigates <sup>35</sup>	3	5	-	-
Corvettes/MTBs <sup>36</sup>	-	6	7	8
Submarines	-	6	4	-
Fighter aircraft	30	48	100	60
Transport aircraft <sup>37</sup>	4	4	8	3
Transp. Helicopters <sup>38</sup>	14	18	18	20
Home Guard	50 000	45 000	22 000	-
<b>Total troops numbers</b>	<b>76 000</b>	<b>69 000</b>	<b>50 000</b>	<b>350 000</b>

**TABLE 3:** Nordic Armed Forces Structure compared (2010). (Source: Danish Ministry of Defence 2009; Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2008; Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a; Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2009a; Danish Ministry of Defence 2009; IISS 2010.)

gional tasks. The Norwegian military force structure is broadly similar to those of Denmark and Sweden, the only difference being in the sense that most units are manned with conscripts, and Norway is more concerned with national military crisis management missions than the other two. Finally, the Finnish Armed Forces is the 'odd man out', with a structure and tasks very different from the others.

As pointed out earlier, armed forces with very different structures and tasks can be assumed to find cooperating difficult. Thus Finland and Denmark would make somewhat inapposite partners. On balance, Denmark, Sweden and Norway would probably have an easy time of cooperating given their compatible force structures. Despite Norway sharing some of Finland's security concerns about Russia, the Norwegian military is still very different from the Finnish Armed Forces. Indeed, in several areas, a Norwegian report on defence cooperation concluded '[Norway and Finland] are too different, not least when it comes to the orientation of their defence forces, membership of alliances, languages and differences in materiel' (Dahl et al. 2007, 21). However, while most of the interviewed officials pointed to Finland's 'differentness' as a potential source of problems, none of those involved with NORDEFECO could point to any concrete episode where Finland's dissimilar defence posture had caused a problem for cooperation. Denmark, however, was unfailingly viewed as having chosen to 'opt out' of most practical aspects of Nordic military cooperation.<sup>39</sup>

For the Danish Armed Forces and MoD, argues Peter Viggo Jakobsen, NATO is seen as 'the only game in town', with Nordic defence cooperation often seen in consequence as a waste of time (Jakobsen 2006, 219). NORDCAPS used to be seen

as at best 'a way of helping Finland and Sweden into NATO and Norway into the EU' and at worst 'a duplication of capabilities established within NATO' (Jakobsen 2006, 219). As Magnus Christiansson contends, comparing Denmark to Sweden, 'while Sweden uses its international missions and operations to score points on the international arena, Denmark has figured out *which actors to receive these points from* on the international arena' (Christiansson 2009, 11–12). The desired partners are identified as the US and the UK, and deploying abroad alongside less capable partners should be avoided (Danish Armed Forces 2007, 13; Rasmussen 2009, 15). As a consequence, says Bertel Hurlin, Denmark is 'over-fulfilling its obligations towards NATO' and has cooperates closely with the United States on security and defence (Heurlin 2007c, 48–49). The United Kingdom has also been a key partner, particularly to the Danish Army (Frantzen 2005, 155–158; Nørby 2006, 44–46). The aforementioned Norwegian report sees Denmark and Norway as sharing many military and political similarities, but 'a challenge for Norway will be to identify areas that can attract Danish attention' and to induce Denmark into tighter military cooperation (Dahl et al. 2007, 26).

Danish defence officials would like to cooperate more with their Nordic partners, they stress, but such cooperation has to make clear economic sense to them from the get-go. While Norway and Sweden seem willing to invest in cooperation merely from the conviction that money will be saved down the line, Danes are unwilling to commit to a project unless it proves superior to doing it in other forums, and better or at least no worse than doing it alone (Fisher 2010 [interview]; Rasmussen 2010 [interview]; Bille 2010 [interview]). Also, it would clearly help if Danish soldiers were deployed alongside other Nordic soldiers again, as the Danish Armed Forces need to prioritise interoperability and cooperation with the partners they are currently deployed alongside (for now, Britain). While larger partners than the Nordics have the disadvantage that Denmark is not an equal partner, they at least can offer many assets and capabilities on which Denmark can draw in international operations, and which the Nordic countries cannot provide (Bille 2010 [interview]).

Nevertheless, Denmark and Norway do cooperate closely on fighter aircraft under the European Participating Air Forces Expeditionary Air Wing (see Paulsen 2007, 8–9), as well as through NATO. For example, air-policing of Norwegian and Danish airspace is handled by NATO's Integrated Air Defence System, aircraft being directed from the Combined Air Operations Centre at Finnerup, Denmark (NATO 2001, 185–187; NATO – Allied Command Operations 2010b; NATO – Allied Command Operations 2010a). Also, on low-level, practical day-to-day activities, e.g. sending company sized units on exercises abroad, Denmark works seamlessly with the other Nordic countries (Bille 2010 [interview]).

'From a position on NATO's semi-periphery,' Nikolaj Petersen argues, 'Denmark



has moved to the core with every intention of staying there' (Petersen 2001, 293). The risk for Denmark lies in its particular attachment to the transatlantic partnership being endangered by Nordic cooperation. While Denmark and Iceland both were positive to the 2003 US invasion of Iraq (Jóhannesson 2004, 130), Denmark was the only Nordic state to support the US invasion with combat forces (Mouritzen 2006, 497–498; see also Mouritzen 2007). Would that have been more difficult if Denmark had been more reliant upon co-located or shared Nordic assets? And would its forces be as apt for expeditionary warfighting in southern Afghanistan if they were harmonised with the other Nordic forces, with less of a focus on expeditionary warfighting alongside the United States and the United Kingdom?<sup>40</sup> In September 2007, when Denmark and Norway were urged by some of their parliamentarians to 'pool' their F-16 aircraft and save on maintenance and operating costs, the idea was given short shrift by the Danish and the Norwegian ministers for defence; they were concerned about their governments' freedom of action (Langballe 2007; Langballe and Klarskov 2007). Apart from legal considerations, the fact that Norway and Denmark had chosen different paths on Iraq, and different types of engagements in Afghanistan, was perhaps not lost on them (see Saxi 2010b, 47–51).

Second, limited resources will constrain how much Nordic cooperation and harmonisation Finland and Denmark can partake in. The idea of harmonisation of national defence structures is anathema to Finland; Finland does not want to abandon its defence system based on territorial defence and national conscription (Forsberg and Vaahtoranta 2001, 73). This puts a clear upper limit on the homogenisation of the Nordic armed forces; it would simply not be possible to bring the vast bulk of Finland's wartime forces up to the equipment and training standards required. Although Finland increased defence spending by 16 per cent in 2009, responding to the 2008 Russian–Georgian War, the purchasing power of the FDF is under pressure (IISS 2010, 117). The FDF will therefore probably continue to be an important exception to the general Nordic trend towards similarity in main weapon systems; the Finnish regional forces, the artillery branch, and parts of the mechanized formations will remain equipped with Cold War era Soviet gear for the foreseeable future (IISS 2010, 182–183).

The last time Finland could afford sufficient stocks of equipment to rearm most of its ground forces, was in the early 1990s. But that was when nearly the entire armoury of the former German Democratic Republic was sold off at bargain prices by the newly unified German state (Raunio 1996, 63–64). Such historical events are unlikely to be repeated, and in any case would not further the homogenisation and NATO interoperability of the Nordic land forces. In practice, Finnish defence officials admit, the core of the ground forces now comprises the three readiness brigades and the two mechanized battlegroups (Toveri 2010 [interview]; Sallinen

2010 [interview]). These units have received the bulk of all new equipment acquisitions over the last few years, although, starting in 2012, the regional forces are slated to enjoy priority (Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2009b, 116).

Despite the Finnish government's aim of achieving an annual 2 per cent real increase in defence appropriations (Finnish Prime Minister's Office 2009a, 117, 125), Finland's resource constraint will require it be very selective about which Nordic materiel projects to get involved in; shortage of resources will be a major constraint on Finnish participation in NORDEFCO (Tuominen 2010 [interview]). For example, it would be fiscally impossible for Finland to replace its more than 1,000 artillery pieces with the Swedish Archer system. This is unlike the situation in Sweden and Norway, where entire older stocks of artillery can be phased out in favour of Archer as they only require 24 self-propelled artillery systems each.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, only parts of the FDF land forces will be able to reach the new 'Nordic' standardisation aimed for under the Nordic mechanized battalion scheme, while Norway, Sweden and Denmark could probably reach this standard in all their mechanized units (Toveri 2010 [interview]).

From a resource point of view, Denmark also differs from the wider Nordic community in spending less on equipment. While Sweden and Finland spends over or close to 30 per cent and Norway more 20 per cent of their budgets on equipment acquisitions, Denmark spends barely 15 per cent (Nordlund, Åkerström, and Lusua 2009, 48). From a resources point of view, Norway and Sweden therefore as appear to be perfectly matched; both spend generously on new equipment and infrastructure, but have relatively small organisations to modernise. Finland has the former, while Denmark has the latter. Denmark nevertheless spends its more limited investments funds more efficiently, however, so the low investment level may be less of a problem than these statistics would indicate (see Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2005).

Finally, language and culture also plays a part in military-to-military cooperation. Again, Finland (and Iceland) comes out as the more challenging partner for the other Nordic states; most Finnish personnel do not have a Scandinavian language as their first language. Finland has been trying to overcome this by employing NATO Standardization Agreements for procedures, systems and equipment components – STANAGs – in all areas of cooperation, making English the lingua franca of cooperation. However, the language barrier remains a challenge to Scandinavian–Finnish cooperation (Tuominen 2010 [interview]).<sup>42</sup>

Iceland has the same problem with its Coast Guard and ICRU personnel, although since they are such a marginal group in terms of *military* cooperation, it does not challenge Nordic cooperation much. Finnish military culture is, however, a challenge given the Finnish military's greater emphasis on secrecy and formal proce-

dures (Mörtberg 2010 [interview]). For example, Swedish and Norwegian exchange officers have experienced problems gaining access to high-level officials and certain information in the Finnish Defence Command. They are also circumscribed in their interaction with their national defence attachés in Helsinki (Anonymous 1 [conversation]; Anonymous 2 [conversation]). The contrast to the Oslo-based Swedish exchange officer is striking; he was integrated into the Norwegian Ministry of Defence almost as a 'normal' official. Indeed, he was entrusted with the task of formulating with another official the Norwegian Armed Force Joint Operations Doctrine 2007.<sup>43</sup>

So just how compatible are the Nordic Armed Forces? Unsurprisingly, the Swedish and Norwegian forces, the original instigators of NORDEFECO, come out as the best 'fit' of the four. They share many similar main weapon systems, broadly similar armed forces structures and tasks, decent resources-to-force structure ratios, and mostly similar language and cultures.<sup>44</sup> The 2007 report on Norwegian-Swedish military cooperation concluded that the 'Norwegian and Swedish Armed Forces are mainly directed at the same tasks, ambitions and defense concepts' and that therefore 'cooperation on force generation can cover the entire breadth of national force structures' (Norwegian and Swedish Chiefs of Defence 2007, 2). Finland, while a dedicated member of NORDEFECO, is hampered by its large structure, which is fiscally nearly impossible to modernize, and different task orientation. The Finnish language, so different from the other Scandinavian languages, and, to a lesser extent, Finland's military culture, is also a challenge to cooperation.

Finally, the Danish Armed Forces would appear be a good match for Sweden and Norway; Denmark's chief problem is perhaps the low level of investment in new equipment. However, the Danes are generally not very interested in Nordic cooperation, which makes them unavailable as a partner for the other Nordic states. The Danish Armed Forces have chosen to address their lack of resources and critical mass problems by cutting whole capacities rather than cooperating with others, thus giving them the 'luxury' of staying on the fringe of NORDEFECO at the moment. The core of NORDEFECO, if one is to judge by compatibility of the Nordic armed forces, is therefore likely to remain Sweden and Norway, with Finland as a dedicated, if selective, third partner.



# The domestic factor: Who gets what, where, when and how?

The most legitimate arguments for and against international military cooperation deal with the consequences to national security, as variously detailed in the preceding perspectives. However, the most serious challenge to Nordic cooperation is perhaps more likely to be related to *domestic* rather than *international* politics. It is the question of political will to make unpopular decisions, such as reducing the number of armed forces bases or the size of the national defence industry, in order to realise the potential gains of Nordic cooperation.<sup>45</sup> There is also a question of how hard the countries will bargain when the distribution of gains takes place, and how party politics and the challenge of bringing to bear the necessary bureaucratic resources to participate in cooperation will be handled. As we shall see, these issues are tightly interlinked.

Burden sharing is normally very challenging for countries in close partnerships and alliances. For NATO it has been perhaps the most divisive issue in its history (Sandler and Hartley 1999, 23). The 2008 NORDSUP progress report foreshadows a potential distributional problem, pointing out that 'cooperation implies trade-offs between costs and benefits' and the Nordic states must be 'ready to cut down on their base, support and logistics structures, acquiring or exchanging these services with the other nations' (NORDSUP 2008b, 2). If and when Nordic cooperation advances far enough, there will be bases, jobs, industrial contracts, weapons development projects and acquisition costs to be distributed among the participating countries. While there is undeniable support for Nordic cooperation at the abstract political level, one can legitimately ask whether this support will endure when coop-

eration reaches the concrete and specific. 'While everyone favours Nordic cooperation on a general level,' ponders Thorvald Stoltenberg, 'they tend to become petty when descending to a concrete level' (Kullin 2009, 34).

One example of this challenge is to expand joint training programmes for the shrinking Nordic officer corps. 'The most difficult question related to a possible merger of the Nordic defence universities', writes Colonel Bjørn Innset, 'would possibly be where to base the new institution' (Innset 2010, 23). Basing personnel outside national territory can be expensive, with some parts of the military organisation 'losing' personnel and functions that are sent abroad (Klæboe 2010 [interview]). These types of question have yet to be addressed in detail, as the Finnish parliamentarian and Social Democrat Erkki Tuomoja noted when he pointed out that the Stoltenberg report 'says nothing about money or costs' (Nordic Council 2009). The devil will be in the detail of *who gets what, where, when and how*. Should one country benefit significantly more than the others, even if all benefit to a degree, it could endanger the domestic legitimacy of the cooperative undertaking. The bargaining will therefore be a painful and agonising process, as countries vie to avoid the proverbial 'short end of the stick'.<sup>46</sup> Lessons learned by Finland from the Swedish-Finnish Advanced Mortar System (AMOS) project can be illuminating in this respect.

After having participated in a joint project between Finnish Patria Vammas and Swedish Haggblunds to develop AMOS, Sweden withdrew without purchasing the system. To Finland's surprise, the contract allowed Sweden to do this without paying any of the development costs of the system. Finland was left with almost the entire bill for developing the system, and Sweden was under no obligation to procure significant numbers of units (Sallinen 2010 [interview]). It is perhaps no accident that Finnish officials now stress the need for 'iron-tight contacts' for future Nordic cooperative ventures.<sup>47</sup> They also want to see a clearer and more explicit distribution of costs and benefits. NORDEFECO could do with more long-term horse-trading, they insist, ensuring a fair 'balance of payment'. If not, they will be hard to point to concrete benefits to Finland from the cooperation, while the 'losses', such as jobs and bases closed, will be all too apparent to NORDEFECO critics. More explicit linkages of costs and benefits would increase the ease with which cost-saving deals could be made among the Nordic states (Sallinen 2010 [interview]; Tuominen 2010 [interview]).<sup>48</sup>

However, burden sharing will be a particular challenge for NORDEFECO, not just because it will involve the distribution of some *relative gains* for all involved, but because of a potentially massive *negative impact* on small, vulnerable local communities. It will therefore be essential to overcome the well-entrenched 'municipality-military complex'. Historically, Swedish and Norwegian defence policies have been particularly influenced by regional employment policy, so much so that one

often speaks of a 'municipality-military complex' in these countries, consisting of local base commanders, municipal and county politicians, and local business people, banding together to prevent the closure of military bases in rural parts of Norway and Sweden (Dörfer 2007, 132; Græger 2007, 50-52).

Knowing the strength of the municipality-military complex, General (Ret.) Sverre Diesen wondered whether Norwegian politicians really would support abolishing a national heavy vehicle maintenance capacity, with corresponding loss of local jobs in rural communities, in order to move the jobs to Sweden (Diesen 2010 [conversation]). Or, as Rear Admiral Jörgen Ericsson asked rhetorically, would Swedish politicians accept the co-location of all the Nordic C-130 transport aircraft to one Nordic air base if that base was not in Sweden (Ericsson 2010 [interview]). These questions are as yet unanswered, because NORDEFCO has not proceeded far enough. How they are answered will be the real litmus test for whether significant savings are possible by integrating and rationalising the support structure of the Nordic armed forces.

In Finland, the 'municipality-military complex' is also strong, but the issue is tied even closer to national security policy than in Sweden and Norway. Having local garrisons and units all over Finland creates a feeling of security in the population, which makes it harder to rationalise the base structure of the Finnish Armed Forces. Public opinion would be hard-pressed to accept the closure of Finnish bases and to move some armed forces capabilities abroad, unless Finnish politicians could demonstrate clearly how it related to a Nordic-wide *quid pro quo* (Sallinen 2010 [interview]).

Denmark could be expected to have an easier time overcoming its municipality-military complex than the other Nordic states. With a much smaller territory, Denmark would presumably find it easier to maintain a less costly and more 'rational' base and force structure, since fewer vulnerable local communities rely on the armed forces as their main employer (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2005, 28; Nordlund, Åkerström, and Lusua 2009, 45). However, even in Denmark, the closure of local bases and the amalgamation of regiments would most likely be the most debated and unpopular aspects of any new Defence Agreement (Nørby 2006, 21).

Defence transformation in Norway and Sweden proved extremely challenging during the 1990s and early 2000s, and only slightly easier and quicker in Denmark (Haldén 2007; Børresen, Gjeseth, and Tamnes 2004, 183-236; Saxi 2010b, 29-60). Finland has yet to restructure the armed forces, despite widespread agreement on the necessity of radically downsizing and restructuring the FDF.<sup>49</sup> Because it deals with changes to the structure of the armed forces, NORDEFCO carries with it some of the same challenges associated with defence forces transformation. On the issue of Swedish defence transformation, one author wrote, 'the single biggest

problem that the Armed Forces faced and will face [...] is how to convince people that the changes are necessary and the future is positive' (Neretnieks 2002, 318). The same could just as easily be applied to Nordic defence cooperation.

While the military leaderships of Norway, Sweden and Finland are united in their view that cooperation is necessary, if need be at the cost of bases and jobs moved abroad, such conviction is likely to be less clear at the lower levels of the military hierarchy and in the general population. Political support for concrete proposals for Nordic defence cooperation could abate when faced with protests against unpopular initiatives. Thus intra-Nordic bargaining may be significantly wing-clipped by a narrow 'win-set'; in other words, the domestic constituencies, including the Nordic publics, voters, parliaments, labour unions, and affected municipalities, who will all eventually have a say in 'ratifying' the outcomes of bargaining within NORDEFECO, may turn out to have a much lower tolerance for some negotiated outcomes than the national defence leadership (see Putnam 1988).

NORDEFECO and the Stoltenberg Report will, however, seemingly not be subject to political vagaries in another sense, by being reliant on the outcome of Nordic election. To most officials involved in Nordic defence cooperation, the ballot box seems irrelevant; Nordic cooperation is so unanimously popular across the political spectrum in all the Nordic states that a change of government is believed to be of little or no significance.<sup>50</sup> Nordic cooperation is also incredibly popular with the Nordic public. An October 2010 poll found that nearly 80 per cent of Nordic citizens have a positive view of Nordic cooperation, and more than half wants more of it (Oxford Research 2010). There have even been serious suggestions to form a Nordic state, most recently from the Swedish historian Gunnar Wetterberg at a meeting of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Reykjavik in November 2010 (see also Wetterberg 2009; Wetterberg 2010).

However, a persuasive argument can nevertheless be made that the domestic political factor is more important than commonly presupposed. The outcomes of the 2005–07 general elections in Norway, Sweden, Finland all produced governments who were all more than ordinarily enthusiastic about Nordic cooperation, if for somewhat different reasons. Meanwhile, the 2007 general election in Denmark re-elected a government which was not very interested in the Nordic arena.

In Norway, the 2005 general election produced a Labour-dominated Centre-Left coalition that included the Socialist Left Party, historically a staunch opponent of Norwegian NATO membership. For Norwegian NATO sceptics, Nordic cooperation had always been viewed as a favourable alternative to the transatlantic partnership (Dörfer 1997, 72). The year after, in 2006, the Swedish general election produced a Centre-Right coalition dominated by the Western-oriented Conservative Party, but which also included the divided Christian Democratic Party and pro-nonalignment



Centre Party. The government was therefore hamstrung on the NATO issue, but for Western-oriented Swedish politicians, Nordic cooperation, which necessarily had to include NATO members Denmark and Norway, has traditionally been seen as a way of aligning Sweden closer to the alliance (Kronvall and Petersson 2005, 43–45; Dörfer 1997, 72). The 2007 Finnish election then allowed the pro-nonalignment Centre Party to remain in government, but only by replacing its Centre-Left coalition with the Social Democratic Party with a Centre-Right coalition including the Conservatives. Both the Foreign Minister and Minister for Defence came from the Conservatives, and were openly supportive of Finnish NATO membership (Steinbock 2008, 204–206). The Social Democratic President remained, however, wholly opposed (Meinander 2006, 242–245).

In Norway, Nordic partnership was hence popular in the government because it allowed for 'non-NATO' military cooperation, while the Swedish and Finnish governments' strong support of Nordic cooperation can be seen as a way of aligning the countries closer to NATO while avoiding actual membership. Meanwhile, in Denmark, the re-election of the Centre-Right government of Anders Fogh Rasmussen in 2007 meant that the Danish Social-Democratic Party, which was more enthusiastic about Nordic cooperation (and UN peacekeeping) than the Danish Liberals and Conservatives (Jakobsen 2010 [conversation]), remained in opposition. A favourable political climate on the Nordic path was thus probably a contributing factor to Norway, Sweden and Finland leading the way towards a common Nordic defence arrangement. But if this favourable political constellation were to change, the impact on Nordic cooperation could be larger than foreseen by many practitioners.

Another domestic factor of importance for NORDEFECO's development, although more international than the 'municipality-military complex' and national electoral politics, is the 'military-industrial complex', i.e. the defence industry of the Nordic states. Armaments manufacturers differ from 'normal' businesses by frequently being considered vital to national security, as well as needing government aid and protection. The former Norwegian Minister of Defence 2005–09, Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen, represents the typical view of government-defence industry relations: 'Our defense industry can only remain in the technological lead if it is internationally engaged, and given the nature of the international defense industry, this requires a strong partnership between government and industry' (O'Dwyer 2009e).

The major Nordic weapons manufacturers in 2008 were the Swedish companies Saab (\$3 billion in arms sales) and BAE Systems Hägglunds (\$670 million), the Finnish Patria (\$670 million), and the Norwegian Kongsberg Gruppen (\$540 million). Together these companies employed more than 22,000 people across the Nordic countries and abroad, about half of them Saab employees. With the exception of Kongsberg Gruppen, which derived only 40 per cent of its sales from

weapons, these companies derived more than 80 per cent or more of their income from the sale of armaments (Jackson 2010). In order to promote Nordic defence cooperation the Nordic countries will probably need some form of common defence industry strategy. At a very minimum, they will need national strategies which do not hamper the objectives set out for NORDEFECO. At the moment, this is not the case. Particularly the continued requirement for offset-purchases complicates Nordic co-operation (Ericsson 2010 [interview]; Anonymous 5 [interview]). The NORDAC Agreement tried to limit the use of industrial offsets for intra-Nordic procurement, but with very limited success (Hagelin 2006, 173).

There are several differences between the Nordic defence industries which complicates having a Nordic approach or strategy. First, there is the traditional fear of Sweden's smaller neighbours that the more numerous and traditionally better-off Swedes will dominate joint undertakings. When the Scandinavian Airlines System was established in 1950, for example, Norwegians were worried that it would be *de facto* run by Sweden (Eriksen and Pharo 1997, 149–150). Such concerns are perhaps not fully unfounded when it comes to the arms industry, since Sweden's armaments industry is much larger than Norway's or Finland's, and significantly larger than Denmark's. Any Nordic defence industry partnership will therefore be unbalanced, with Sweden standing to benefit the most from an intra-Nordic arms market.

While official Swedish policy no longer favours its national arms industry, and weapons will be purchased 'off-the-shelf' based solely on military requirements, the government nevertheless remains closely involved with the industry (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009a, 86–90).<sup>51</sup> In 2010, a new Defence and Security Export Agency was established, to promote the sale of Swedish arms abroad, and the same year the government decided to domestically develop a new class of submarines, of which at least two would be constructed. One reason was the need 'to preserve [Sweden's] unique technical know-how' in the submarine industry (Tolgfors 2010b). That Finland and Norway are fearful that Nordic cooperation on defence might be a way for Sweden to develop a privileged market for Swedish weapons is not surprising (Toveri 2010 [interview]; Anonymous 3 [conversation]).

Second, the Swedish and Danish industries are mostly privately owned, while those of Norway and Finland are partly government owned. Patria is owned jointly by the state of Finland (73.2 per cent) and the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) (26.8 per cent), while the Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry owns the majority of the shares in Kongsberg Gruppen (50.001 per cent) (Patria 2010, 2; Kongsberg Gruppen 2010, 9). The small and privatised Danish arms industry has expressed worry that Nordic cooperation will disproportionately favour large government-owned manufactures (O'Dwyer 2010). Also, different ownership structures could complicate attempts by Nordic arms manufactures to merge

or form close partnerships, as governments will have a huge influence on company structures.

Third, and perhaps the greatest challenge, the Nordic states do not really form an intra-Nordic arms market, since outside suppliers provide about 70–80 per cent of the weapons imported into the Nordic states. As a result, the Nordic armament partnership is not the most important source of trade for any of the countries involved (Hagelin 2006, 167–178). The most important Nordic arms trade relationship is the Swedish–Norwegian one, where each takes about 20–25 per cent of the other's exports. In addition, Sweden and Finland have close defence industrial relations, with significant joint Swedish–Finnish partnerships, such as Patria Hägglunds, being large arms exporters (Hagelin 2006, 167–173). Thus common or joint procurement should be easiest to achieve for Norway, Sweden and Finland, as should joint or common maintenance of and support for identical equipment in the national inventories. This is not to say that it will be easy however.

In a long-term industrial view, a unified but secluded Nordic arms market is probably neither realistic nor independently viable. The Nordic states will ultimately be better served by developing their industry as part of a wider European defence industry market, but using the Nordic framework as a supplement. It can thus help Sweden remain one of the top five or six arms manufacturers in Europe, giving Norway and Finland a medium-sized partner, and gaining some protection from the asymmetrical relationship from the much larger continental European and US firms (Brzoska 2006).

Finally, perhaps some of the strongest arguments levelled against NORDEFECO concern the time spent travelling to and from meetings, partaking in working groups, and hours spent preparing for these activities. Some have argued that the cost in money and time simply doesn't justify the results. There is in other words a fear that NORDEFECO could become a drain on ministry and armed forces resources, without providing sufficient returns to justify the effort. In addressing this criticism, the Nordic Chiefs of Defence emphasise the need to avoid the over-bureaucratisation of NORDEFECO; 'we need concrete results' argues Norway's General Harald Sunde, 'not bureaucracy, meetings and travelling' (Langvik-Hansen 2010). General Sverker Göranson, his Swedish counterpart, has given a similar message to his subordinates: NORDEFECO has to demonstrate its ability to deliver results now, rather than only promise future gains (Anonymous 5 [interview]; Hård af Segerstad 2010 [interview]; Ericsson 2010 [interview]).

In Finland and Denmark there is increasing concern for a bloated bureaucracy. Compared to Sweden's and Norway's, the Finnish and Danish Armed Forces have relatively fewer high-ranking staff officers. Sweden had 1,347 officers of lieutenant colonel rank or higher in the late 2000s, and Norway 925, Finland only possessed

449 officers at this rank, and Denmark only 411 (Swedish Defence Administration Inquiry 2005, 113). Denmark thus has the fewest high-ranking officers to spare, but there again the country only takes part in a limited number of NORDEFECO activities. The ambition to participate fully would be challenging to achieve for Finland, and a potential challenge for Denmark, especially when it comes to taking part in the myriad working groups and decision-making bodies under the Nordic defence umbrella. The Finns have therefore advocated lowering the number of such groups, concentrating on fewer, and lowering the rank-level of their members (Toveri 2010 [interview]). The Danes also emphasise what they view as a tremendously positive effect of forming NORDEFECO, namely the significant reduction in the number of working groups and potential projects compared to its predecessor organisations (Bille 2010 [interview]).

The Nordic countries have agreed to cut the number of groups, and focus on the ones generating results. While this might limit the potential breadth of cooperation, the Nordic states are not aiming to cooperate on everything, just in such areas where cooperation makes the most sense and can yield the best result (Hård af Segerstad 2010 [interview]). The new NORDEFECO organisation has fewer working groups and decision-making forums, has more senior decision-makers, and is more integrated with the national chain of command of the member states than its predecessors. Therefore, it is hoped, it will be capable of making and implementing decisions faster and with greater ease. It is also hoped it will foster a more unified 'NORDEFECO culture', replacing the more fractionised attitudes which sometimes developed between the participants in the predecessor organisations.<sup>52</sup>

How then does a domestic perspective on NORDEFECO add up? One answer is that political leaders will have to be willing to make potentially unpopular decisions about closing down jobs and bases, and possess the persuasive skills to explain what is happening to the Nordic publics and why. Favourable political constellations will also help: Centre-Left governments in Norway and Denmark, combined with Centre-Right governments in Sweden and Finland, would be the most fortuitous for NORDEFECO. Also, abandoning the requirements for offset-purchase on intra-Nordic weapons deals, and possibly abandoning national industrial champions in favour of larger Nordic or European entities, would facilitate cost-effective cooperation. Finally, avoiding the danger of bureaucratisation is a key requirement. Participating countries have to see that their 'output' from cooperation is greater than their 'input'. This means shutting down institutions that fail to produce results, limiting meetings and travelling, and keeping the number and seniority of officials involved as low as possible. If most or all of these domestic variables are met in the Nordic countries in the coming decades, it will facilitate the growth of effective Nordic defence cooperation.

# Conclusion and summary

This study began by asking why and how the Nordic states sought to strengthen cooperation in the security and defence field, and whether they are likely to succeed. Ultimately, the conclusion is that the Nordic countries are not prepared to assume full collective responsibility for Nordic security, but the Nordic framework does provide an attractive avenue for technical-military cooperation designed to deal with the interconnected challenges of flat defence budgets, rising defence equipment costs, increasingly demanding international missions, and shrinking armed forces structures in danger of going below 'critical mass'.

As we have seen, the historical record of Nordic defence cooperation is not encouraging. Historically inclined academics with an interest in NORDEFECO and the Stoltenberg Report have therefore generally been sceptical about what to expect from the process. Krister Wahlbäck finds few examples over the past 150 years where the Nordic have managed to stand united in the face of adversity (Wahlbäck 2010), and according to Clive Archer, 'every report on or move towards Nordic cooperation since 1948 which has dipped its toe into that pond has drawn back from taking the plunge' (Archer 2010a, 14). From an institutional point of view, the unequal memberships of European security organisations have also been seen as challenge to Nordic cooperation. In the opinion of Magnus Petersson, Nordic cooperation risks becoming a competitor to NATO and the EU, the very organisations it explicitly aims to compliment (Petersson 2010c; 2010a). At the very least, varying membership in European security organisations could make Nordic interstate cooperation on 'high politics' security issues difficult.

From a regional perspective, the Nordic states clearly do not agree on which challenges and threats they are facing in their own region. To Copenhagen the challenges and threats are de-territorialised, and could come from anywhere, but typically far away. Sweden shares this threat perception, with a caveat for Russian power

in the Baltic Sea. Norway is concerned about its High North region and Russia, but also feels the need to employ resources to deal with global challenges and threats. Finland, like Norway, is simultaneously concerned with its shared border with Russia, as well as the challenges of globalisation, but Finnish defence efforts are markedly concentrated on the former. Finally, Iceland is chiefly concerned about non-military challenges in its vicinity, such as environmental disasters, but remains also wary of the possibility of a 'scramble for the arctic', which would make more traditional military threats once again an issue. Such different views do not lend easily to Stoltenberg's urging 'the Nordic countries [to] assume collective responsibility for their own security' (Stoltenberg 2009a, 11). Almost the only thing the Nordic states do agree on is their shared desire not to sub-regionalise security; keeping NATO and the EU interested in the region is a key objective for all of them.

Considering these challenges, what would be required of NORDEFECO to nevertheless become a success? Perhaps the key lesson from past attempts at Nordic security cooperation is that undertakings which aim at having the Nordic states jointly and autonomously solve security challenges in their own region should not be pursued. While tremendously popular in the abstract, such initiatives have tended to ultimately prove unsuccessful when attempts are made to implement them. There is little indication that the outcome would be much different today. What may work, however, is incremental and functional cooperation on cutting costs and giving the Nordic states a greater 'bang for their buck' in world politics. Such efforts will be greatly helped by the strong political support for closer Nordic cooperation, and should strive to present itself as chiefly about 'technical cooperation' to save money and deliver more operational effect, thus drawing on the strong Nordic legacy of successful cooperation in the practical sphere.

The practical approach of direct military-to-military cooperation, following the initiative taken by the Nordic Chiefs of Defence in 2006, is just such an effort. It starts on the technical side, envisioning common research, acquisition, education, training, and possibly international deployment. Aiming to increase the military power available to each Nordic state, it nevertheless promises to maintain nationally autonomous operational capabilities and thus maintain the national freedom of action (Norwegian and Swedish Chiefs of Defence 2007). Similar principles informed many of the proposals of the Stoltenberg Report. For instance, running co-located or joint diplomatic and consular missions could increase the global diplomatic presence of the Nordic states, and, perhaps, also their diplomatic clout, while saving money (Stoltenberg 2009b, 26-27).

This does not, however, at least not in theory, presuppose close cooperation of the Nordic states on foreign and security policy; the Nordic armed forces are to remain separate entities capable of autonomous action. Such pragmatic initiatives would therefore have the added value of having the best chance of including the

entire Nordic family, since most such undertakings would not run counter to the vital interests of any one Nordic state. While cooperation on procurement, training and education would always create some dependencies with security implications (Innset 2010), it should be possible through careful negotiations to avoid the most dependency-creating outcomes. As Tuomas Forsberg argues, on an optimistic note: 'there is much to be done without breaking the taboo on alliance loyalty or military nonalignment, as well as the independent ability for national defence' (Forsberg 2010, 136). Where costs can be saved without encroaching on too many opposing national interests, progress is to be expected.

From a military point of view the Nordic armed forces are also suitable partners; there is much equipment commonality among them, geographical proximity makes day-to-day cooperation easier, and shared bureaucratic and military cultures facilitate partnerships. Denmark, Norway and Sweden also have somewhat similar force structures and share a common Scandinavian language, making cooperation among these three particularly feasible from a military perspective. Iceland would continue to be marginalised within a NORDEFECO focused on practical military-to-military cooperation, but should the Icelandic government so desire the Icelandic Coast Guard and ICRU could possibly be given a role at the military level of the organisation.

The NORDSUP/NORDEFECO approach would be well in line with what is happening elsewhere in Europe, as increased cooperation on generating military power may in fact be becoming something of a European *Zeitgeist* at the moment. In November 2010, Britain and France signed an agreement on closer military cooperation, including shared use of aircraft carriers, shared maintenance and training on the A400M transport aircraft, and joint research on nuclear technologies and satellites. The two states nevertheless emphasised that their armed forces were to remain under sovereign control and capable of acting autonomously (Burns 2010). The Swedish-German 'Ghent initiative' launched the same month aimed to do likewise; save money by furthering European cooperation on generating military power. There were several similarities between these two initiatives and NORDEFECO. Furthermore, the Nordic states' most important extra-European partner, the US, would be very positively inclined towards practical Nordic cooperation aimed primarily at enabling the Nordic states to generate more military capabilities from their defence budgets.

While cooperation on generating military power seems sensible from an international point of view, there are potentially numerous domestic obstacles which need to be overcome. The distribution of jobs, bases and industrial contracts will need to be carefully handled by the political leadership, since they will inevitably come up against strong vested interests in all Nordic countries. Challenging two-level negotiations involving both domestic and international give-and-take bargaining will

have to be made (see Putnam 1988). It would also facilitate Nordic cooperation if pro-NATO parties on the right remained in government in Sweden and Finland, and paradoxically also if somewhat more NATO-sceptical and pro-Nordic and pro-UN parties on the Left governed Norway and Denmark.

Given time, a successful track record of incremental and pragmatic cooperation among the Nordic armed forces, or for that matter the Nordic foreign services, will in turn strengthen a shared sense of Nordic identity. The longer the cooperative structures are allowed to function without upheavals, the more established and 'natural' Nordic defence cooperation is likely to become (Kullin 2009, 60). Over time, this type of cooperation is likely to promote confidence-building and communication, further the common definition of problems, modify explicit behavioural standards, and encourage a common sense of identity among the Nordic defence practitioners who take part.<sup>53</sup> It is probably no accident that those officers who work directly with NORDEFECO issues are much more positive towards Nordic cooperation than their peers; perhaps, as one Danish officer jokingly stated, one may speak about a 'Stockholm syndrome' within NORDEFECO (Bille 2010 [interview])? Successful cooperation could also in turn further 'functional spillover', as close cooperation in one area, for example force production, logistics or joint weapons acquisition, creates pressure to push integration further in other areas, for instance to establish common or joint units. The argument may become that in order to realise fully the potential gains from cooperation, the integration of the Nordic armed forces must proceed even further.<sup>54</sup>

Over the last few decades Nordic cooperation is said to have been losing ground to European and transatlantic partnerships (Stoltenberg 2009a, 9; Christensen 2006). The EU has clearly surpassed 'Norden' (the North) in terms of functional cooperation on e.g. freedom of movement and common market, and NATO has replaced the Nordic grouping in the UN as the most important institution through which Nordic military forces are deployed on international operations. NORDEFECO could, however, reinvigorate some of the traditional aspects of practical Nordic cooperation, this time in the military sphere. Since NATO and the EU are such large and heterogeneous organisations, countries within these organisations are coming together in small clusters to cooperate on generating military power. This has widened the 'window of opportunity' for the Nordic framework to generate 'added value' through cost-effective functional military cooperation. However, if Nordic defence cooperation is to be a success it must remain as an unequivocal complement to NATO and the CSDP, maintain its chief advantage of being small, nimble and homogeneous by being careful about accepting new members, and manage potential domestic opposition by delivering visible *quid pro quos* which benefit all participating countries equally.



## ENDNOTES

1. If Canada and the United States are included, the figure becomes 4.5 and 2.7 per cent respectively.
2. **However, if what the Nordic countries spend on border guards plus civilian and economic defence (e.g. stockpiling strategic materials) were also included, the Cold War figures would be higher.** For example, the Finnish Cold War figure would arguably be about 2.1 per cent. (Juusti and Matthews 1990, 86).
3. The percentages are mine. They are based on figures listed, and may differ somewhat from official estimates. Population size, economy, military expenditure and military manpower are taken from IISS The Military Balance 2010. The definition of military expenditure used here is either that of the national defence budget or NATO definition of defence expenditure, depending on availability, and figures are from 2008. For Iceland, 'military spending' and 'active troops' represents the Icelandic Coast Guard. Territory represents the most up to date figures available from The World Factbook (2010).
4. In Sweden this objective will only be reached by 2019, but from 2014 the number should be about 1,700 troops.
5. 'Critical mass' is a contended term, but used the way that it is described here it has been a favourite of the Norwegian and Swedish Chiefs of Defence in the late 2000s, with international cooperation as the proposed solution to overcome this challenge (see Diesen 2005, 173-177; Syrén 2006, 48-52).
6. 'High politics' is usually defined as issues dealing with the security and survival of the state, whereas 'low politics' are all those 'normal' or 'non-essential' matters of no danger to the vital security interests of a state (e.g. trade and cultural issues).
7. In Sweden, the correct title is Supreme Commander of the Swedish Armed Forces (Överbefälhavaren), and in Finland literally Commander of the Defence Forces (puolustusvoimain komentaja). However, in the interest of simplicity, the NATO term Chief of Defence will be employed.
8. Iceland, having no armed forces of their own, will not take part in the military side of things, being chiefly represented at the policy side. Nevertheless, nearly all Nordic officials interviewed stress that as a Nordic country it was natural to include Iceland in NORDEFCO. In Norway it was also stressed that Iceland is a NATO country.
9. Presentation by Senior Adviser Trond Heimvik, Norwegian MoD, September 2010.
10. Note that the paragraph does not guarantee an 'automatic' military response, only 'such action as it deems necessary' (Article 5), and that response is limited by member states' 'respective constitutional processes' (Article 11).
11. For example, the US push for an integrated and coordinated arms production effort within NATO in the 1950s and 1960s did not succeed (McGlade 2001).
12. The term is used to illustrate the superpower dominance of Europe during the Cold War.
13. The term was used less and less in the 1990s, and was definitively 'retired' in Sweden in 2002 (Engelbrekt 2008, 49).
14. See unofficial translation online (Heninen.net 2010).
15. Note that prior to the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, CSDP was known as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).
16. Both Sweden and Finland commissioned officials studies of the implications of the Lisbon solidarity clause for their security and defence policy (see Swedish Ministry of Defence 2009b; Tiilikainen 2008).
17. The exceptions are Sweden, Finland, Austria, Cyprus, Ireland and Malta.
18. All Nordic officials interviewed stressed the excellent day-to-day working relationship with their Nordic counterparts, but officials from NATO states noted that working with non-NATO countries does pose some challenges.
19. The goal is hampered somewhat by Denmark's 'opt out' from the CSDP (DIIS 2008, xi-xii).

20. Nearly all officials interviewed stressed the positive response which Nordic defence cooperation has received in both NATO and EU circles.
21. The exception was 4 mechanized reserve battalions, and the Swedish Home Guard.
22. Danish forces in the Arctic do not have 'real military' tasks, only surveillance and sovereignty tasks (Petersen 2009b, 58). The Icelandic Coast Guard also lacks any combat capability.
23. As illustrated by their decision to establish a common Baltic Sea maritime picture, through the Sea Surveillance Co-operation Finland Sweden (SUCFIS), and their work to include other Baltic Sea nations in this undertaking (Kaskeala 2009a, 12-13).
24. Unlike Finland, Sweden has a seaport on the North Sea, Gothenburg, which makes it slightly less reliant on the Baltic Sea for maritime transport.
25. None of the Norwegian defence officials interviewed mentioned such a common understanding, and some denied it actively when asked about it concretely.
26. Comment by a senior Norwegian official involved with the Stoltenberg report at the XIII Annual Suomenlinna Seminar, Finnish National Defence University, Helsinki, 2-3 June 2010.
27. All Nordic officials interviewed shared this view.
28. Most officials interviewed emphasised this issue, particularly so in Finland, where it is considered paramount.
29. Interviews with defence officials in Sweden, Norway and Finland.
30. The Patria AMV decision has been challenged legally, and in October 2009 a Swedish court ordered the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration to carry out a new procurement process.
31. Several Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish officials involved in the NORDSUP process stressed the need to develop such common standards.
32. Particularly Swedish officers involved in NORDEFECO emphasised this point, which is perhaps a legacy of the Cold War, when Sweden had a large indigenous arms industry which made custom-built weapons for the Swedish Armed Forces (see e.g. Andersson 2007, 148-152).
33. The main exceptions are the Home Guard, the Royal Guard battalion, the Border Guard battalion and the Coast Guard (Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 61-62).
34. The Royal Guard battalion can also be employed as a manoeuvre battalion, though not for international operations.
35. Numbers include ships currently being built.
36. Missile Torpedo Boats.
37. Numbers include aircraft still being delivered.
38. Numbers include helicopters still being delivered, and do not include light utility helicopters nor helicopters being phased out of service.
39. Nearly all officials interviewed in Norway, Sweden and Finland shared these views. Note however that interest for Nordic cooperation was generally seen as being on the rise in Copenhagen.
40. To name an example of its NATO compatibility, unlike the other Nordic states, Denmark formally has no separate operational level doctrine, but relies on NATO doctrine (Frantzen 2005, 169-173; Innset 2002, 3).
41. Finland is estimated to have about 1,136 artillery pieces in its inventory, which includes multiple rocket launchers and 120mm heavy mortars (IISS 2010, 182)
42. Many defence officials also mentioned the language barrier as a challenge to cooperation.

43. Ibid (see also Norwegian Armed Forces 2007). The other author was a Norwegian civilian, Kjell Inge Bjerga, Head of Department of Civil-Military Relations, and Fellow at Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies.
44. Though there are cultural differences. Also, note that the Swedish and Norwegian land forces are more similar, and therefore more interested in co-operation, than their navies and air forces.
45. Almost all military respondents in Norway and Sweden emphasised the possible lack of political will to make nationally unpopular decisions as the major future challenge for Nordic cooperation.
46. This may be seen, in IR terminology, as a 'relative gain' vs. 'absolute gain' problem.
47. Comment by a senior Finnish defence official at the XIII Annual Suomenlinna Seminar, Finnish National Defence University, Helsinki, 2-3 June 2010.
48. Also, comments by senior Finnish defence officials at the XIII Annual Suomenlinna Seminar, Finnish National Defence University, Helsinki, 2-3 June 2010.
49. All those interviewed who agreed to speak on this issue agreed that Finland was heading for a radical shake-up of its force structure, but opinions varied on how soon this was likely to happen.
50. Almost all Nordic officials interviewed shared this view.
51. See also an article by the director of the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration (Holmgren 2010).
52. This view was held by almost every interviewee, although some speculated that the separate NORDCAPS, NORDAC and NORDSUP 'ways of doing things' would persist in NORDEFCO.
53. Similar effects have been observed with loose intergovernmental foreign and security policy cooperation setups before, such as with the European Political Cooperation (1970-1993) (see Smith 2004). As for the Nordic states, Pernille Rieker argues that Nordic participation in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as the CSDP, has gradually led to the Europeanization of their security and defence policies (Rieker 2003).
54. The term 'functional spillover' is associated with the neo-functionalist theory of European integration, as is, to a lesser extent, 'elite socialisation' (for a short description, see Jensen 2010, 75-77).

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Senior Adviser, Section for Capacities and Structure Planning, Department for Defence Policy and Long Term Planning

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Desk Officer, Department for Security and Defence, Icelandic MFA

**RASMUSSEN, JØRN ERIK (MAJOR, DANISH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE)**

(Meeting at Danish Ministry of Defence, Copenhagen, 20 September 2010)

Security Cooperation and International Law

**RØKSUND, ARNE (REAR ADMIRAL, NORWEGIAN NAVY)**

(Meeting at Norwegian Ministry of Defence, Oslo, 30 June 2010)

Head of Department, Department of Defence Policy and Long Term Planning, September 2007 – T.D.

**TUOMINEN, MANU (LIEUTENANT COLONEL, FINNISH ARMY)**

(Meeting at Finnish National Defence University, Helsinki, 2 June 2010)

JS Strategic Plans, NORDEFECO, Senior Staff Officer, Finnish Defence Command

**TOVERI, PEKKA (COLONEL, FINNISH ARMY)**

(Meeting at the Finnish Defence Command, Helsinki, 31 May 2010)

Operational Plans (Land), Finnish Defence Command

**SALLINEN, ANU (DEFENCE POLICY ADVISER, FINNISH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE)**

(Meeting at the Finnish Ministry of Defence, Helsinki, 1 June 2010)

International Defence Policy Unit, Finnish MoD

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### KONTAKT

Institutt for forsvarsstudier, postboks 890 Sentrum, 0104 Oslo.

Telefon: 23 09 59 00, e-post: [info@ifs.mil.no](mailto:info@ifs.mil.no).

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